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**LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME:
TOWARD A SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST THEOLOGY
OF CHILDHOOD**

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The subject of children and childhood has not traditionally been considered worthy of serious theological consideration. In fact, reflection on the nature of children and their spiritual formation has often been considered “beneath” the work of theologians and Christian ethicists, and thus relegated “as a fitting area of inquiry” only for those directly involved in ministry with children.¹ As a result, the few teachings that the church has offered on the nature of children have developed in light of practice. While it is true that our practice of ministry does “influence our theologising about it,” pastoral ministry with children should ideally flow out of a carefully articulated theology of childhood, and not *vice versa*.² Thus the purpose of this paper is to (1) explore biblical perspectives on children and childhood, (2) examine historical perspectives on children in the Christian church, and (3) begin to articulate a Seventh-day Adventist theology of children and childhood, as well as the implications of such a theology for the practice of ministry with children within an Adventist context.

Old Testament Perspectives on Children

Children play a crucial role in the story of God and humanity. In the opening book of the Bible, God creates human beings in his image. Then, in his “first recorded words” to humanity, God pronounces a blessing on human beings, a blessing that concerns children: “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it’” (Gen 1:28a).³ In these simple words, God confers the blessing of procreation on humanity. This blessing is reiterated when God establishes a covenant with Noah and his children: “Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth’” (Gen 9:1).

¹Marcia J. Bunge, “Historical Perspectives on Children in the Church: Resources for Spiritual Formation and a Theology of Childhood Today,” in *Children’s Spirituality: Christian Perspectives, Research, and Applications*, ed. Donald Ratcliff (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2004), 43.

²*Ibid.*

³Scottie May, Beth Posteroski, Catherine Stonehouse, and Linda Cannell, *Children Matter: Celebrating Their Place in the Church, Family and Community* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 26. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of the Bible will be from the NIV.

Children are also central to the promises that God makes to Abraham: “I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing . . . and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Gen 12: 2-3). These divine promises were dependent on the birth of children. Therefore, it is striking that across three generations children were so “hard to come by” in this family chosen by God.⁴ When God did fulfill his promises, however, the descendants of Abraham recognized that their children were a fulfillment of these divine promises. When Jacob fled from Laban and returned to the land of his brother, Esau asked, “Who are these with you?” Jacob answered, “They are the children God has graciously given your servant” (Gen 33:5). When Joseph met Jacob in Egypt, he introduced his children as “the sons God has given me here” (Gen 48:9). Ultimately, God’s promise to make Abraham into a great nation is also fulfilled: “[T]he Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them” (Exod 1:7a). By using the terms “fruitful,” “multiplied,” and “filled,” Moses not only recognized the fulfillment of God’s promises to Abraham, but also alluded to his covenant with Noah and the first blessing on humanity at the creation of the world, thus reminding the reader that “the gift of children in general, and of the Israelite children in particular, is a distinguishing, tangible manifestation of God’s ongoing blessing of humankind.”⁵

Children continue to play a prominent role in the book of Exodus, particularly in the first half of the book: in the genealogies of the first and sixth chapters; in Pharaoh’s attempt to kill the male Hebrew infants; in the birth and rescue of baby Moses; and in the climax of the plagues upon Egypt, when the firstborn of Egypt are killed, while the firstborn of Israel are “passed over” (Exod 12:27). Children are also central to the instructions that God gives to the Israelites regarding the commemoration of this event: “when your children ask you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’ then tell them” (Exod 12:26-27; cf. 10:2). In Exod 13:15-16, the command is once again reiterated, and the fate of Egypt’s children, at whose cost Israel’s children had been redeemed, is highlighted.⁶ Leviticus and Numbers continue

⁴Terrence Fretheim, “God Was With the Boy: Children in the Book of Genesis,” in *The Child in the Bible*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 6. Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel all experienced barrenness; see Gen 15:2-4; 18:1-15; 25:21; 30:1-8, 22-24.

⁵Claire R. Matthews McGinnis, “Exodus as a ‘Text of Terror’ for Children,” in *The Child in the Bible*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 28.

⁶While such a meaning may not seem evident at a first reading of the passage, the *Haggadah* or Passover Seder, a Jewish document that provides the order of the Passover celebrations, refers to the suffering of the Egyptians. The document includes this group reading: “Though we descend from those redeemed from brutal Egypt, and have ourselves rejoiced to see oppressors overcome, yet our triumph is diminished by the slaughter of the foe, as the wine within the cup of joy is lessened when we pour ten drops for the plagues upon Egypt.” This group reading is preceded by the quote from the *Talmud*: “Our rabbis taught: When the Egyptian armies were drowning in the sea, the Heavenly Hosts broke out in songs of jubilation. God silenced them and said,

to highlight the importance of children. The Israelites are expressly forbidden to sacrifice their children (Lev 18:21; 20:1-5), as such practice is linked directly with profaning God's name. Thus Roy Gane comments, "This was a particularly heinous form of idolatry because it showed cruel disrespect for precious life entrusted to parents."⁷ In addition to giving children prominent attention, the book of Deuteronomy highlights their centrality to the survival of Hebrew national and religious identity. It is evident, therefore, that the theme of children and their importance to God's plan of redemption plays an important role in the books of Moses. The "gift of children," given at creation, is reinforced in the covenant between God and Abraham and plays a crucial role in the survival of Hebrew nationality and identity, ultimately serving as continuing evidence of God's blessing upon humankind.⁸

The message that children are a blessing given by God is confirmed throughout the remainder of the OT. Solomon, for example, proclaims that children are "a heritage" and "a reward" from the Lord, and that "the man whose quiver is full of them" is blessed (Ps 127:3-5). Similarly, the author of Psalm 128 declares that the man who "fears the Lord" is blessed with a wife and children (vv. 1-4). Coupled with this view that children are gifts from God and a sign of his blessing is the concept of children as sources of joy.⁹ From Abraham and Sarah, who rejoice in the birth of their son Isaac (Gen 21:6) to the promise given to Zechariah and Elizabeth that their child will be "a joy and delight" to them (Luke 1:14), the Scriptures are filled with examples in which children are spoken of as sources of joy and a special blessing from the Lord.

In addition to pronouncing children a blessing and a joy, the OT also speaks of adult obligation to children. In Genesis, God asserts that he has chosen Abraham, "so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just" (18:19). This theme of adult responsibility to guide and nurture children in the "way of the Lord" is repeated in many passages of Scripture. In the ordinary tasks of "sit[ting] at home" and "walk[ing] along the road, parents are to teach their children to love the Lord their God with all their heart" (Deut 6:5). During annual celebrations and when encountering sacred monuments, parents are to tell their children what God has done for them (Exod 12:26-27; 13:8; Lev 23:43; Josh 4:23). Again

"My creatures are perishing, and you sing praises" (Herbert Bronstein, ed., *A Passover Haggadah* [Middlesex, UK: Penguin, 1982], 48-49). In his commentary on Exodus, Terrence Fretheim sees the statements found in chap. 13 as a reminder to the Jewish people that their redemption came at the cost of Egypt's firstborn children. He thus writes that this passage gives "a special twist to the issue of the firstborn. In essence, Israel is to continue to be attentive to its firstborn because of what the *Egyptian* firstborn have suffered. . . . This is thus an everlasting reminder in Israel at what cost Israel's firstborn were redeemed" (*Exodus* [Louisville: John Knox, 1991], 149).

⁷Roy Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 361.

⁸McGinnis, 42.

⁹Bunge, 45.

and again adults are reminded to “tell their children about [God’s] faithfulness” (Isa 38:19) and “the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord” (Ps 78:4). Adults are also to teach children in “the way [they] should go” (Prov 22:6), so that they may know what is “right and just and fair” (Prov 2:9).

In addition to the obligation for guiding and nurturing their own children, the Scriptures also teach communal responsibility for “the fatherless” or “orphan” children of society (Exod 22:22-24; Deut 14:28-29; James 1:27). This “human obligation” is grounded in God’s pledge to execute justice and mercy to these most vulnerable members of society (Deut 10:17-18; Hos 14:3; Pss 10:14, 17-18; 68:5-6; 146:9).¹⁰

New Testament Perspectives on Children

Children also play a remarkably prominent and important role in the writings of the NT, particularly in the Synoptic Gospels. Even though Jewish society considered children a blessing from God, children in Jesus’ day still lived on the margins of society. This was “a world of and for the adult.”¹¹ Yet the Gospels are replete with stories of children, particularly the Gospel according to Luke, which not only records the birth of both John the Baptist and Jesus, but which alone among the Gospels that “pauses to open a window” onto the childhood of Jesus.¹² Furthermore, the Gospels record that Jesus repeatedly focused his attention on children, taking the time to hold them and bless them (Matt 19:13-15; Mark 10:16; Luke 18:15-17), as well as heal them (Luke 8:41-42, 49-56; 9:37-43; cf. Matt 17:14-18; Mark 7:24-30). Not only did Jesus welcome and bless the children, he affirmed their place in the kingdom of God. When the disciples sought to turn the children away from him, apparently considering them insufficiently important to warrant his attention, Jesus commands, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these” (Matt 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16). Then, in an even more radical statement, Jesus continues: “Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child

¹⁰Walter Brueggemann, “Vulnerable Children, Divine Passion, and Human Obligation,” in *The Child in the Bible*, ed. Marcia Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 399.

¹¹John T. Carroll, “‘What Then Will This Child Become?’ Perspectives on Children in the Gospel of Luke,” in *The Child in the Bible*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 177-178, 191. Catherine Stonehouse and Scottie May point to the fact that in the accounts of feeding the five thousand in Matthew and Luke only men are counted (Matt 14:21; Luke 9:14) (*Listening to Children on the Spiritual Journey: Guidance for Those Who Teach and Nurture* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010], 13). A general disregard for children is also evident in the disciples’ rebuke to the mothers who brought their young ones to Jesus (Matt 19:14). The same Greek word, translated as “rebuke,” is used in Mark 9:33 when Jesus “rebukes” Satan, who was behind Peter’s words, as well as in various accounts where Jesus “rebukes” the demons. Cf. W. A. Strange, *Children in the Early Church* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996), 6-7.

¹²Carroll, 177.

will never enter it” (Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17). As Catherine Stonehouse and Scotty May so poignantly state: “Children, not just adults, belong in God’s kingdom. Furthermore, they are not marginal members of the kingdom, just tagging along with their parents, waiting to grow up and become real members. No, children are models in the kingdom of God, showing adults how to enter.”¹³

According to Jesus, anyone who wishes to enter God’s kingdom should look to those of lowest power and status as models to be emulated. Just as Jesus himself is “the paradigm of greatness in the upside-down world where God is in charge,”¹⁴ so children are symbolic of the “upside-down, inside-out” world that is God’s kingdom.¹⁵ When the disciples argue about who will be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, Jesus again challenges them to demonstrate greatness according to the upside-down values of God’s kingdom by welcoming children. In welcoming children in his name, he asserts, they will discover they have welcomed God himself (Matt 18:1-5; Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-48).

While in the remainder of the NT children do not appear to play a prominent role, it is evident that they were included in the households of those who came to believe in Christ. At a time when children continued to be marginalized, the early Christian church, as portrayed in the book of Acts, appears to have followed the example of Jesus and welcomed children.¹⁶ It seems of importance to Luke, for example, to indicate that the entire households of Cornelius and the jailer came to believe in God (Acts 11:14; 16:31-34). Commenting on the Greek word *oikos* (translated as “household” or “family”), Otto Michel suggests that in the discourses of Acts “it is explicitly emphasized that the conversion of a man leads his whole family to the faith; this would include wife, children, servants and relatives living in the house.”¹⁷ While Luke’s language is ambiguous regarding the value of individual decisions, his statements appear to be in harmony with Peter’s thinking, when, in his Pentecost sermon, he exclaimed: “the promise is for you and your children” (Acts 2:39). Furthermore, while the Epistles seem to exclusively use the term “children” to describe Christian believers, Paul’s exhortation for fathers to not “exasperate” (Eph 6:4) or “embitter” (Col 3:21) their children indicates a countercultural sensitivity to children’s needs.

In summary, the Scriptures portray children as blessings from God and sources of joy, deserving of guidance and nurture from both parents and members of the faith community. Jesus’ suggestion that children are “models of greatness”¹⁸ further reinforces God’s great valuing of children. Theologians within the Christian era, however, have not always depicted children in such

¹³Stonehouse and May, 14.

¹⁴Carroll, 191.

¹⁵Ibid., 194.

¹⁶Strange, 70-71.

¹⁷Otto Michel, “Oikos,” *TDNT* (1967), 5:130.

¹⁸Stonehouse and May, 17.

positive terms. It is to a brief examination of historical perspectives on children within the Christian tradition that we now turn.¹⁹

Historical Perspectives on Children

Throughout the centuries, theologians within the Christian church have expressed a variety of perspectives on children and childhood. Much of this diversity has revolved around the nature of children, particularly in regard to the sinfulness of children and thus their salvation. Were children to be considered innocent and good, or were they, by nature, evil and depraved? What was the status of children within the church, including when and why were they to be baptized? Were they to be considered of an equal status within the community of faith, or were they, until a certain age, in a different category than adult believers? Some discussion has also centered on the nature of adult obligations to children.

The Post-Apostolic Church

Although the Christian church evolved in a world where children were not highly valued,²⁰ the historical evidence suggests that the early post-Apostolic church attempted to follow the example of Jesus by providing a countercultural, all-inclusive environment for children and other marginalized groups.²¹ The Patristic evidence of this era suggests that children tended to be embraced by the community and functioned not just as spectators during worship services, but were taught alongside the adults, occasionally called on to serve,²² and partook in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.²³ Similarly, the early church

¹⁹For a more comprehensive overview of historical perspectives on children in the Christian tradition, see James Riley Estep Jr., who explores views of children in the Ante-Nicene (second- and third-century) church ("The Christian Nurture of Children in the Second and Third Centuries" in *Nurturing Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives and Best Practices*, ed. Holly Catterton Allen [Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2008]); and Marcia J. Bunge, ed., who examines how key theologians from the fourth to the twentieth centuries have viewed children (*The Child in Christian Thought* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001]).

²⁰Frank R. Cowell, *Life in Ancient Rome* (New York: Perigee, 1980), 35; Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 69, 73.

²¹This period encompasses the last part of the first century and stretches out to the middle of the second century. The subapostolic writings such as 1 Clement and *Didache*, as well as the writings of the Apostolic Fathers appear during this period. See Francis Sullivan, *From Apostles to Bishops* (New York: Newman, 2001), 54.

²²See, e.g., Cyprian, *Letter 32* (ANF 5:312).

²³Strange, 104, suggests that while the NT is silent on children's participation in the early Christians' Lord's Supper, there are no reasons why they should have been forbidden from being a part of the ordinance. After all, Strange notes, the early Christians were familiar with the Passover celebration, in which children were required to participate. Furthermore, he argues "we can also say that when we begin to have some

appears to have looked to Jesus' teachings on children for understanding their nature.²⁴ Thus the Patristic writers of the early second century tended to highlight the innocence, rather than sinfulness, of children.²⁵ It was not until

firm evidence, in the third century, we find children receiving Communion without the matter being controversial. If a change had occurred in the century and a half that separates the NT from our first reference to child communion, then it was a change that had happened without causing a stir. It would also have been a change in a period when children were generally relegated to a sphere of family religion and away from full participation in the church. If children were first admitted to communion during the second century, it would have been a move against the tide of the times. It seems more probable that they were admitted to the Lord's Table from the beginning" (ibid., 74). Generally scholars are in agreement that the evidence for children's participation in communion during the earliest Christian centuries is more implied than evident. One of the strongest evidences for the widespread acceptance of paedocommunion (i.e., infant communion) in the early centuries comes from Cyprian (d. ca. 258), who reports an incident where a child refused the cup: "When, however, the solemnities were finished, and the deacon began to offer the cup to those present, and when, as the rest received it, its turn approached, the little child . . . turned away its face, compressed its mouth with resisting lips, and refused the cup. Still the deacon persisting, and, although against her efforts, forced on her some of the sacrament of the cup" (*The Treatise on the Lapsed* 25 [ANF 5:444]). For more evidence supporting the claim of paedocommunion in the early Christian centuries, see Blake Purcell, "The Testimony of the Ancient Church," in *The Case for Covenant Communion*, ed. Gregg Strawbridge (Monroe, LA: Athanasius, 2006), 132-145; and O. M. Bakke, *When Children Became People: The Birth of Childhood in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 246-251.

²⁴Estep, 65-67.

²⁵In the early Patristic writings, one finds statements such as: "Be simple and guileless, and you will be as the children who know not the wickedness that ruins the life of men" (*Herm. Mand.* 2.1 [ANF 2:20]). "They are as infant children, in whose hearts no evil originates; nor did they know what wickedness is. . . . Such accordingly, without doubt, dwell in the kingdom of God, because they defiled in nothing the commandments of God" (*Herm. Sim.* 9.29 [ANF 2:53]); "Since, therefore, having renewed us by the remission of our sins, He hath made us after another pattern, that we should possess the soul of children" (*Barn.* 6.11 [ANF 1:140]). Other Apostolic Fathers expressed similar sentiments. Aristides, e.g., wrote that on the death of a child God was to be thanked, "as for one who has passed through the world without sins" (*Apology* 15 [ANF 9:278]); Athenagoras argued that "for if only a just judgment were the cause of the resurrection, it would of course follow that those who had done neither evil nor good—namely, very young children—would not rise again" (*Res.* 14 [ANF 2:156]); Irenaeus (d. ca. 202) spoke of children as examples of "piety, righteousness, and submission" (*Haer.* 2.22.4 [ANF 1:391]); he also used the garden imagery of creation to describe the innocence and simplicity of children (*Epid.* 14, trans. J. Armitage Robinson [Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002], 5); similarly, Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-215), and his pupil Origen (ca. 185-254) emphasized the innocence of children. Clement spoke of children as young lambs and birds, whose inner "harmlessness and innocence and placable nature . . . are acceptable to God"

the third century, within the context of debate over infant baptism, that the notion of children's sinfulness was introduced.

The first unambiguous reference to infant baptism appeared in the third century in writings ascribed to Hippolytus (d. ca. 235).²⁶ It appears that, at the time, the practice was still divisive and subject to debate. Tertullian (ca. 150-220), for example, argued for a "delay of baptism." "Why does the innocent period of life hasten to the 'remission of sins?'" he asked. Children, he believed, should know what they are asking for as far as salvation is concerned.²⁷ In contrast, Cyprian (d. ca. 258) was supportive of infant baptism, arguing that although children were not guilty of their own sins, they were "born after the flesh according to Adam," and thus in need of remission for "the sins of another."²⁸ Cyprian's views constitute the foundation upon which Augustine, one of the most important early church fathers, developed his views on infants and original sin, which became a watershed for the Christian understanding of the nature of children.²⁹

Augustine's (354-430) unique thoughts on the nature of children developed during the period of his disputations with Pelagius.³⁰ Prior to his involvement with this debate, Augustine appeared to affirm the innocence of children. In his treatise, *On the Freedom of the Will*, for example, and with reference to the children "slain by Herod," he suggested that, even though they had died unbaptized, these children were to be considered "martyrs" for whom God had some "good compensation."³¹ Later in his life, however, after

(*Paed.* 1.5 [ANF 2:212]), while Origen devoted several sections of his *Comm. Matt.* (13.16 [ANF 9:484-486]) to extol the virtues of children who have "not tasted sensual pleasures, and [have] no conception of the impulses of manhood."

²⁶"And they shall baptise the little children first. And if they can answer for themselves, let them answer. But if they cannot, let their parents answer or someone from their family" (*Trad. ap.* 21.3, ed. Gregory Dix [London: SPCK, 1968], 33). See also *NCE* (2003), s.v. "Baptism of Infants." For a discussion of whether Hippolytus authored this text, see Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 89-92.

²⁷"Let them know how to 'ask' for salvation, that you may seem (at least) to have given 'to him that asketh'" (Tertullian, *Bapt.* 18 [ANF 3:678]).

²⁸Cyprian, *Ep.* 58.5 (ANF 5:353-354).

²⁹Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 18-19.

³⁰Pelagius, a British monk, was a teacher in Rome around the time of Augustine. In essence, his teaching revolved around the theme of absolute freedom of human beings who are endowed with the ability to initiate the process of salvation by their own efforts without the need for God's unmerited grace (*ODCC* [1997], s.v. "Pelagianism"). For a comprehensive overview of Augustine's position on the nature of children, see Martha Ellen Stortz, "Where or When Was Your Servant Innocent? Augustine on Childhood," in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 78-102; and Bakke, 97-104.

³¹Augustine, "Free Will" 3.23.67-69, in S. Aurelii Augustine, *De libero arbitrio*, trans. Carroll Mason Sparrow (Richmond, VA: Dietz, 1947), 141-142.

reflecting on his own infancy and in response to the Pelagian controversy, Augustine firmly rejected any form of innate innocence of newborn human beings. Against Pelagius's argument that infants were born in the same state as Adam before the fall, thus possessing perfect free will, and that sin was the result of forming a habit of sinning as a result of "evil examples" of sinning individuals such as parents,³² Augustine argued that "the sin of Adam was the sin of the whole human race."³³ As a result, he asserted, although they lacked the physical ability to do harm, infants were sinful from birth. They not only inherited and exhibited sinful tendencies, but as a further consequence of Adam's transgression they carried personal moral guilt for Adam's transgression (or original sin) and could not be considered "innocent."³⁴ Baptism was then needed to remove the guilt of sin and to cement the infant's status as being a part of the family of God, i.e., the church.³⁵ Thus Augustine's understanding of children and childhood as reflected in his *Confessions* was much less positive than that of his patristic predecessors.³⁶

The Medieval Church

Augustine's teachings on original sin, its influence upon children's nature, and the importance of infant baptism "formed and informed, transformed and deformed" attitudes toward children within the Christian tradition.³⁷ By the fifth century, infant baptism was well established; and by the eleventh century, the Medieval church, preying on parental fears of their children's eternal damnation, had introduced baptismal regulations, including penance and monetary fines for infractions.³⁸ It was also during the Medieval era that the church came to question children's participation in the Lord's Supper. Although the liturgical guidelines from the eleventh and twelfth centuries allowed for the administration of the eucharistic elements to newly baptized infants, this practice was beginning to die out by the late Middle Ages. This coincided with the development of the doctrine of transubstantiation, a belief that, following the priestly blessing, the elements were substantially, but not

³²J. L. Neve, *A History of Christian Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1946), 141.

³³*Ibid.*, 141.

³⁴Augustine, *Conf.* 1.7, trans. Vernon J. Bourke (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1953), 12.

³⁵Roger Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Academic, 1999), 270-274. For a deeper study of Augustine's response to Pelagianism, see Augustine, *Four Anti-Pelagian Writings: On Nature and Grace, On the Proceedings of Pelagius, On the Predestination of the Saints, On the Gift of Perseverance*, trans. John A. Mourant and William J. Collinge (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1992).

³⁶See Augustine, *Conf.* 1.1-20, in Bourke, 3-32.

³⁷Stortz, 79.

³⁸Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (London: Yale University Press, 2001), 23-24.

accidentally, transformed into the real blood and body of Christ.³⁹ Because of this, church leaders became convinced that the elements, i.e., the bread and wine, should be treated with greater reverence, and guarded against “being spit or regurgitated.” Children came to be seen as too young to understand and believe in the real presence, both necessary for “receiv[ing] communion rightly.”⁴⁰

The Medieval church also saw an attempt at a more middle-of-the-road position on the doctrine of original sin. Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1224-1274), a Medieval theologian, endeavored to reconcile the Augustinian doctrine of original sin with a more optimistic, Aristotelian vision of children, which tended to view children as essentially innocent, but immature.⁴¹ Although Aquinas accepted the official Augustinian position of the fundamental sinfulness of children, he viewed children as having “potential for spiritual growth, with the aid of grace.”⁴² The greatest challenge to Aquinas’s thinking was the apparent contradiction between his acceptance of an Augustinian understanding of original sin as an impediment to salvation⁴³ and his Aristotelian belief in the actual innocence of unbaptized children.⁴⁴ In his solution to this theological quandary, Aquinas proposed the existence of *limbus infantium*, or children’s limbo,⁴⁵ a state between heaven and hell where unbaptized children were consigned.⁴⁶ As bearers of original sin, Aquinas

³⁹*Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 1994), 336-337. The term “transubstantiation,” or change of substance, was used for the first time during the Lateran Council (1215) and developed under the influence of the newly discovered Aristotelian writings, in which Aristotle distinguished between the substance and the accidents of all things. It became accepted that during the eucharistic sacrifice the visible accidents such as taste, color, and texture remained unchanged, while the underlying invisible substance became the real body and blood of Christ (John Strykowski, “Transubstantiation,” in *The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, ed. Richard P. McBrien [New York: HarperCollins, 1995], 1264).

⁴⁰Orme, 214.

⁴¹Christina L. H. Traina, “A Person in the Making: Thomas Aquinas on Children and Childhood,” in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 106; cf. Joseph James Chambliss, *Educational Theory as Theory of Conduct: From Aristotle to Dewey* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 34-35; and A. Scott Loveless and Thomas Holman, *The Family in the New Millennium: Strengthening the Family* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2006), 6-9.

⁴²Traina, 106.

⁴³Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* III, Q68. Art. 2, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Allen, TX: Christian Classics, 1981), 4:2393-2394; cf. idem, Appendix 1, Q1, Art.2 (5:3002).

⁴⁴Eileen Sweeney, “Vice and Sin,” in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 158-159.

⁴⁵Christopher Beiting, “Limbo in Thomas Aquinas,” *Thomist* 62 (1998): 238-239.

⁴⁶Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* Suppl. Q69, Art. 6 (5:2822-2823); cf. Shulamith Shabar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1990), 45.

asserted, the souls of unbaptized children know that they do not deserve heaven, thus they do not “grieve through being deprived of what is beyond [their] power to obtain,”⁴⁷ but rather, “enjoy full natural happiness.”⁴⁸

While Medieval theologians wrote little on the nature of children and childhood, and generally upheld the Augustinian doctrine of original sin and the need for infant baptism, Medieval Catholicism was influenced by Aristotelian philosophy, and thus tended to present a milder picture of children, and humanity in general, than that of Augustine. The Reformation of the sixteenth century, on the other hand, rejected Aristotelian influences upon Christian theology and attempted a return to an Augustinian vision of childhood.⁴⁹

The Reformation

In many ways, the Protestant Reformers’ views on children and childhood were congruent with that of their predecessors. Martin Luther (1483-1546), for example, was an Augustinian monk who held deeply pessimistic anthropological views. Like Augustine, he believed that infants entered the world not merely inclined to evil, but as fallen sinners, evil from birth and infected with “irreversible egoism,” which he saw as the “all-pervading symptom of human perversion.”⁵⁰ Thus he vehemently defended the practice of infant baptism on the grounds that children come into the world infected with original sin and need the grace of this sacrament as urgently as do other human beings.⁵¹ Gerald Strauss, however, notes that while such a pessimistic anthropology satisfied “the claims of theology,” in practice Luther viewed children as “tractable, open to suggestion and receptive to mollifying influence.”⁵² In their early years, he believed, children were relatively innocent, only to be “spoiled” in later years. For this reason, children needed firm parental guidance in order to implant “religious and moral impulses.”⁵³ It is in this area of parent-child relations that Luther contributed a unique perspective on children and childhood.⁵⁴ At a time when the church viewed the vocation of

⁴⁷Aquinas *Summa Theologica*, Appendix 1, Q1, Art. 2 (5:3004).

⁴⁸*ODCC*, s.v. “Limbo.” Cf. Beiting, 238. In recent centuries, Aquinas’s doctrine of limbo created much theological difficulty for Roman Catholic theologians. See George J. Dyer, “Limbo: A Theological Evaluation,” *Theological Studies* 19 (1958): 32-49.

⁴⁹Gerald Strauss, *Luther’s House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978), 33-34.

⁵⁰Strauss, 33.

⁵¹For a detailed study of Luther’s view on the sacrament of baptism and the reasons why Luther saw baptism as an essential part of the Christian life, see Jonathan D. Trigg, *Baptism in the Theology of Martin Luther* (New York: Brill, 1994).

⁵²Strauss, 34, attributes this to the fact that eventually the monk Luther became a kind and loving father.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 35.

⁵⁴Jane E. Strohl, “The Child in Luther’s Theology: ‘For What Purpose Do We Older

priests and monks as a “religiously superior or more spiritual” occupation than any other, Luther insisted on the priesthood of all believers.⁵⁵ This, according to William Lazareth, conditioned him to see the vocation of parents, or any other vocation of the common life, as an equally significant exercise of that priesthood.⁵⁶ Therefore, Luther devotes much time delineating the duties of parents toward their children. Providing children with care and nurture, he believed, was central to Christian discipleship, for when parents fulfilled their duties to their children, they were serving as their “apostle and bishop.” “There is no greater or nobler authority on earth than that of parents over their children, for this authority is both spiritual and temporal.”⁵⁷ “Indeed,” he concluded, “for what purpose do we older folks exist, other than to care for, instruct, and bring up the young?”⁵⁸

In the same vein as Luther, John Calvin (1509-1564) also espoused a deeply pessimistic anthropology, spawned by the Augustinian concept of original sin. In fact, his position on the nature of children is often seen as even “more pessimistic than that of any of his predecessors or contemporaries,” ultimately leading to his doctrine of total depravity.⁵⁹ Regarding children, he wrote, “For that reason, even infants themselves, while they carry their condemnation along with them from the mother’s womb, are guilty not of another’s fault but of their own. For, even though the fruits of their inquiry have not yet come forth, they have the seed enclosed within them. Indeed, their whole nature is a seed of sin; hence it can be only hateful and abhorrent to God.”⁶⁰ While Calvin occasionally spoke positively of children,⁶¹ more

Folks Exist, Other Than to Care for . . . the Young?” in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 134-141; cf. “Apology of the Augsburg Confession,” in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. and ed. Theodore G. Tappert, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959), 103.

⁵⁵Martin Luther, “The Freedom of a Christian,” in *Martin Luther’s Basic Theological Writings*, ed. Timothy Lull (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 399; cf. Alister E. McGrath, *Christianity’s Dangerous Idea* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 52-53; Jaroslav Pelikan, *Reformation of Church and Dogma* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 272-273.

⁵⁶William H. Lazareth, *Luther on the Christian Home: An Application of the Social Ethics of the Reformation* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), 132-133.

⁵⁷Martin Luther, “The Estate of Marriage,” in *Luther’s Works*, ed. Walter I. Brandt and Helmut Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1962), 45:46.

⁵⁸Martin Luther, “To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany,” in *Martin Luther’s Basic Theological Writings*, ed. Timothy Lull (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 464.

⁵⁹Barbara Pitkin, “The Heritage of the Lord: Children in the Theology of Calvin,” in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 167.

⁶⁰John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. and indexed Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973), 1:251.

⁶¹In book 1 of the *Institutes*, e.g., we find this statement: “‘Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast established strength.’ Indeed, he not only declares that a

frequently he portrayed God as “wondrously angry toward them; not because he [was] disposed of himself to hate them, but because he would frighten them by the feeling of his wrath in order to humble their fleshly pride, shake off their sluggishness, and arouse them to repentance.”⁶² As Jerome Berryman notes, however, despite his pessimistic understanding of the nature of children, Calvin tended not to dwell on the sinfulness of children and was deeply concerned with their upbringing and education.⁶³ Unfortunately, those who followed Calvin tended to take his teachings to the extreme, portraying an angry God to children, and instilling fear, rather than love, of God.⁶⁴

The first serious challenge to the doctrine of original sin did not occur, primarily, within a discussion of the nature of children, but instead transpired within the debate over baptism. The Anabaptists, the “step-children” of the Protestant Reformation,⁶⁵ agreed with much of the teachings of other Reformers; however, many of them believed that the magisterial Reformers had only gone halfway in implementing true reformation of the church and returning to NT Christianity.⁶⁶ One issue that became of central importance to the Anabaptists was baptism, which, they believed, should be voluntary and based on an understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ.⁶⁷ Menno Simons (1492-1559), a former Catholic priest and a prominent Anabaptist leader, asserted that since infants and young children “have no faith by which they can realize that God is, and that He is a rewarder of both good and evil, as they plainly show by their fruits, therefore they have not the fear of God,

clear mirror of God’s works is in humankind, but that infants, while they nurse at their mother’s breasts, have tongues so eloquent to preach his glory that there is no need at all of other orators” (*Institutes* 1.5.3 [McNeill and Battles, 55]).

⁶²Calvin, *Institutes* 3.2.12 (McNeill and Battles, 557); cf. Jerome W. Berryman, *Children and the Theologians: Clearing the Way for Grace* (New York: Morehouse, 2009), 101.

⁶³Berryman, 102; Pitkin, 165.

⁶⁴Philip Greven, *Spare the Child* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 136; cf. Berryman, 101. Also see Jonathan Edwards’s sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” in *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God and Eleven More Classic Messages* (Orlando: Bridge-Logos, 2003), 37-56.

⁶⁵For a detailed study of Anabaptism, see Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964).

⁶⁶Olson, 415; Verduin, 11-20.

⁶⁷Williston Walker notes that the Anabaptists’ opposition to infant baptism stemmed from the larger issue of “their opposition to the use of force in matters of faith and their abandonment of the age-old requirement of religious uniformity” (*A History of the Christian Church* [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1970], 327); cf. Menno Simons, “Christian Baptism,” in *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, trans. Leonard Verduin, ed. J. C. Wenger (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1956), 257; Keith Graber Miller, “Complex Innocence, Obligatory Nurturance, and Parental Vigilance: ‘The Child’ in the Work of Menno Simons,” in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 195.

and consequently they have nothing upon which they should be baptized.”⁶⁸ Baptizing infants, he asserted, gave parents a false sense of security about their children’s salvation, resulting in the possibility of children being “raised without the fear of God,” and thus living “without faith and new birth, without Spirit, Word and Christ.”⁶⁹

Instead of baptizing infants, “who cannot be taught, admonished, or instructed,” Simons exhorted Christian parents to nurture their children’s faith until they had reached the “years of discretion,”⁷⁰ when they could make the decision to be baptized. He thus states:

Little ones must wait according to God’s Word until they can understand the holy Gospel of grace and sincerely confess it; and then, and then only it is time, no matter how young or old, for them to receive Christian baptism as the infallible Word of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ has taught and commanded all true believers in His holy Gospel. . . . If they die before coming to years of discretion, that is, in childhood, before they have come to years of understanding and before they have faith, then they die under the promise of God, and that by no other means than the generous promise of grace given through Christ Jesus. And if they come to years of discretion and have faith, then they should be baptized. But if they do not accept or believe the Word when they shall have arrived at the years of discretion, no matter whether they are baptized or not, they will be damned, as Christ Himself teaches.⁷¹

Implicit in Simons’s rejection of infant baptism was his understanding of the nature of children. Although Simons acknowledges that children have an innate tendency to sin, “inherited at birth by all descendants and children of corrupt, sinful Adam,” a tendency that “is not inaptly called original sin,”⁷² he appears to differentiate “between a *nature* predisposed toward sin and actual *sinning*, disallowing the former to obliterate childhood innocence.”⁷³ Thus, according to Simons, although children inherit original sin, they are innocent “as long as they live in their innocence,” and “through the merits, death, and blood of Christ, in grace,” they are “partakers of the promise.”⁷⁴ Children who die “before coming to the years of discretion,” declares Simons, “die under the promise of God.”⁷⁵

⁶⁸Simons, 240.

⁶⁹Menno Simons, “Reply to False Accusations,” in *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, trans. Leonard Verduin, ed. J. C. Wenger (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1956), 570.

⁷⁰Simons, “Christian Baptism,” 241.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Simons, “Reply to False Accusations,” 563.

⁷³Miller, 201, emphasis original.

⁷⁴Menno Simons, “Reply to Gellius,” in *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, trans. Leonard Verduin, ed. J. C. Wenger (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1956), 708.

⁷⁵Simons, “Christian Baptism,” 241. Furthermore, Simons suggests that children of both believing and unbelieving parents remain innocent through the grace of Christ (ibid., 280; idem, “Reply to Gellius,” 707).

The concept of an “age of discretion” presented the Anabaptists with a “theological conundrum”; namely, if children were born with a sinful nature, but were innocent of Adam’s sin, at what age did they become accountable for the actual sin in their lives?⁷⁶ Early Anabaptist leaders, including Hans Hut (ca. 1490-1527), Ambrosius Spittelmaier (ca. 1497-1528), and Hans Schlaffer (d. 1528), suggested that “adults aged thirty and over qualified for believers’ baptism,” basing their view on a “desire to imitate Jesus,” who was baptized at age thirty.⁷⁷ At the other end of the spectrum, Balthasar Hubmaier (ca. 1480-1528) suggested that a minimum age for baptism was seven, which was the age at which the “will” of the child was thought to develop.⁷⁸ In contrast, Simons did not identify an exact age of discretion, suggesting only that as they grew, children increasingly demonstrated “the evil seed of Adam.”⁷⁹ Furthermore, he asserted, “no matter how young or how old” a child,⁸⁰ it was spiritual maturity rather than age that determined accountability and readiness for baptism.⁸¹ Until that time, the grace of Christ covered the sinful nature of children.

The Anabaptist perspective, which affirmed the sinful nature of children and the need for God’s grace for salvation, while moving away from an Augustinian concept of original sin, impacted only a minority of Christian traditions.⁸² The Lutheran and Reformed traditions continued to embrace the traditional concept of original sin. One significant exception was Jacobus Arminius, a Dutch Reformed theologian, who took exception to the view that the guilt of Adam’s sin was imputed to infants. Because of the atoning work of Christ, infants were innocent, and if they died in infancy, their salvation was secure.⁸³ Other Reformers, particularly those influenced by Calvinism, vehemently opposed Arminius’s views; however, his thinking ultimately influenced the beliefs of John Wesley (1703-1791) and the Methodist movement.

⁷⁶Holly Catterton Allen, “Theological Perspectives on Children in the Church: Anabaptist/Believers Church,” in *Nurturing Children’s Spirituality*, ed. Holly Catterton Allen (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2008), 118.

⁷⁷Miller, 206; cf. Allen, 119.

⁷⁸Miller, 206.

⁷⁹Simons, “Christian Baptism,” 240.

⁸⁰Ibid., 241.

⁸¹Miller, 206.

⁸²Today the Amish, some Baptists, Brethren, Hutterites, Mennonites, Bruderhof Communities, and Quakers are considered successors of the Continental Anabaptists. See Allen, 115.

⁸³Jacobus Arminius, *Apology or Defence*, 13-14, in *The Works of James Arminius*, trans. and ed. James Nichols (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 10-14; cf. Mark A. Ellis, *Simon Episcopius’ Doctrine of Original Sin* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 77-79.

The Early Modern Era

Wesley's views on the nature of children, which some scholars consider eclectic, are neither "fully consistent" nor "complete."⁸⁴ Most commentators agree that Wesley accepted the notion of original sin,⁸⁵ which he seemed to have understood as an inherited "corruption of nature" that affects "all mankind," and requires "even infants [to be] born again."⁸⁶ Wesley saw this corruption as so pervasive that even the "holiest parents beg[a]t unholy children, and [could] not communicate their grace to them as they [did] their nature."⁸⁷ Even though every child inherited original sin, Wesley asserted, God's grace was also at work from the beginning of life. God extended this grace, which Wesley termed "preventing grace" to every human being, without waiting "for the call of man."⁸⁸ It was because of God's preventing (or prevenient) grace that all human beings had the ability to respond to God.⁸⁹ Although Wesley's understanding of the nature of children has been interpreted in many ways,⁹⁰ it appears that he held a belief in original sin "in dynamic tension" with a conviction that God's grace was at work in the life of a child.⁹¹ This same tension is inherent in Wesley's views on baptism and conversion.⁹² Although scholars disagree on

⁸⁴ See Susan Etheridge Willhauck, "John Wesley's View of Children: Foundations for Contemporary Christian Education" (Ph.D. dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1992), 123. The incompleteness is perhaps because Wesley himself married late and had no children of his own. See Richard P. Heitzenrater, "John Wesley and Children," in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 298, 286.

⁸⁵Willhauck, 123.

⁸⁶John Wesley, *The Doctrine of Original Sin according to Scripture, Reason and Experience in Answer to Dr. Taylor* (New York: Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, 1817), 340-341.

⁸⁷Ibid., 340.

⁸⁸John Wesley, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation" in *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Albert C. Outler (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986), 3:207. Roger Olson defines prevenient grace as follows: "it is simply the convicting, calling, enlightening and enabling grace of God that goes before conversion and makes repentance and faith possible" (*Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Academic, 2006], 35).

⁸⁹Michael J. Scanlon, "The Christian Anthropology of John Wesley" (Th.D. dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1969), 100-101; cf. Wesley, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," 207-209.

⁹⁰For a detailed examination of Wesley's Christian anthropology, as well as an overview of the many ways it has been interpreted by commentators, see Willhauck, 102-173.

⁹¹Catherine Stonehouse, "Children in Wesleyan Thought," in *Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives, Research and Application*, ed. Donald Ratcliffe (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2004), 140.

⁹²Ibid.

his understanding of infant baptism,⁹³ Wesley himself affirmed and practiced the baptizing of infants. He did not, however, view baptism as necessary for salvation.⁹⁴ Rather, his position was that baptism was the “initiatory sacrament which enters us into covenant with God;”⁹⁵ but being part of the covenant did not automatically secure salvation. Each individual still needed to experience conversion or new birth through justifying faith,⁹⁶ which, according to Wesley, was possible even in early childhood,⁹⁷ thus making it imperative that children’s faith be carefully nurtured.⁹⁸

American revivalist preachers, including Calvinist Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)⁹⁹ and Arminian Charles G. Finney (1792-1875),¹⁰⁰ underscored this theme of childhood conversion. In contrast with Wesley, however, revivalists’ appeals were often accompanied by threats of hellfire and expectations for both children and adults to experience emotional conversions.¹⁰¹ Fearing for the salvation of their children, “parents regularly took their children to such meetings, ‘that they might be converted.’”¹⁰²

Horace Bushnell (1802-1876), a prominent Congregational pastor who came to be considered “the quintessential American theologian of

⁹³For an overview of the debate over infant baptism among Wesleyan scholars, see Willhauck, 134-136.

⁹⁴Ibid., 164.

⁹⁵John Wesley, “On Baptism,” in *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Albert C. Outler (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 319.

⁹⁶For Wesley, infant baptism was clearly equivalent to the Jewish rite of circumcision, which required both a converted heart and an “inward circumcision” for salvation (“On Baptism,” 322-323). For a detailed discussion of Wesley’s views on infant baptism and conversion, see Willhauck, 125-173.

⁹⁷In his journal, Wesley provides an account of a three-year-old child, who went through a conversion just prior to his death (“Journal 6,” in *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater [Nashville: Abingdon, 1991], 20:123; cf. Heitzenrater, 295).

⁹⁸Willhauck, 168, 238. For details of Wesley’s views regarding the nurture of children, see *ibid.*, 174-242. Cf. Heitzenrater, 285-299.

⁹⁹For an overview of Edwards’s theology of children, see Catherine A. Brekus, “Children of Wrath, Children of Grace: Jonathan Edwards and the Puritan Culture of Child Rearing” in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).

¹⁰⁰May, Posteroski, Stonehouse, and Cannell, 104.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 104-105.

¹⁰²William Fee, *Bringing in the Sheaves* (Cincinnati: Cranston & Curtis, 1896), 32, cited in A. Gregory Schneider, *The Way of the Cross Leads Home: The Domestication of American Methodism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 74; cf., Margaret Bendroth, “Horace Bushnell’s Christian Nurture,” in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 353.

childhood,”¹⁰³ reacted against the revivalist emphasis on emotional experience as the mark of true conversion, claiming, in Margaret Bendroth’s words, that “this requirement spiritually disenfranchised children from the start.”¹⁰⁴ Instead of urging children to undergo emotional conversion experiences, Bushnell envisioned that children could be gradually guided toward faith by their parents.¹⁰⁵ In his classic text, *Christian Nurture* (first published in 1847), Bushnell suggested: “the child is to grow up a Christian, and never know himself as being otherwise.”¹⁰⁶ This was a very simple statement, notes Theodore Thornton Munger, “but it shook New England theology to its foundations. The phrase, by its very form, challenged the extreme individualism into which the churches had lapsed, and recalled them to those organic relations between parents and children.”¹⁰⁷ Although Bushnell assumed that the individual experience of conversion might eventually occur in the child’s life,¹⁰⁸ he did not see that this needed to be “a sudden, cataclysmic event”; rather, he saw conversion as a “gradual awakening of the soul to God” under the influence of godly parents.¹⁰⁹ Instead of indoctrinating their children “in respect to their need of a new heart” and “turning all their little misdoings and bad tempers into evidences of their need of regeneration,”¹¹⁰ parents should “rather seek to teach a feeling than a doctrine; to bathe the child in their own feeling of love to God, and dependence on him, and contrition for wrong before him.”¹¹¹

¹⁰³Ibid., 352; cf. Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *Theology in America: The Major Protestant Voices from Puritanism to Neo-Orthodoxy* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2003), 317.

¹⁰⁴Bendroth, 352.

¹⁰⁵Much of Bushnell’s classic, *Christian Nurture*, is devoted to a call for nurturing children’s faith in a very different way from the one traditionally assumed within his contemporary Protestant circles ([New Haven: Yale University Press, 1888], see esp. “What Christian Nurture Is,” 1-51).

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 4; cf. Berryman, 151. Bushnell’s attitude toward children may have been spawned by his enjoyment of his own children. In her *Life and Letters of Horace Bushnell*, one of Bushnell’s daughters, Mary Bushnell Cheney, recounts a happy childhood, due in part to her father’s personality. She wrote: “First among my recollections of my father are the daily, after-dinner romps, not lasting long, but most vigorous and hearty at the moment.” Her father’s “frolics” became part of her memory of a rich and stimulating childhood, in which life was made “a paradise of nature, the recollection of which behind us might image to us the paradise of grace before us” ([New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1903], 452-453).

¹⁰⁷Theodore T. Munger, *Horace Bushnell: Preacher and Theologian* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1899), 67.

¹⁰⁸Luther A. Weigle, “Introduction,” in *Christian Nurture*, Horace Bushnell (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1888), 35; cf. Bushnell, 9-10, 15-16, 62.

¹⁰⁹Bendroth, 353.

¹¹⁰Bushnell, 59-60.

¹¹¹Ibid., 39.

Not surprisingly, Bushnell's opponents viewed his scaled-down understanding of conversion and faith formation as overly optimistic. Some suggested that he had essentially discarded the notion that children were born with a sinful nature, thus encouraging children to underestimate their need for regeneration and to "believe in the 'delusion' of their own righteousness."¹¹² Although scholars struggle to pinpoint Bushnell's views on human nature and original sin,¹¹³ it appears that he did not deny that sin was a universal human problem;¹¹⁴ however, he saw the transmission of sin as the result of intergenerational interactions. He thus wrote: "The sin of no person can be transmitted as a sin, or charged to the account of another. But it does not therefore follow, that there are no moral connections between individuals, by which one becomes a corrupter of others."¹¹⁵ Indeed, according to Bendroth, he viewed "salvation as a thoroughly intergenerational process, taught and transmitted" through family interactions.¹¹⁶ His faith in the influence of the home environment, particularly "the near salvific power" of a godly mother,¹¹⁷ led him to believe that careful Christian nurture would most certainly lead children to become faithful Christians.¹¹⁸ Although Bushnell's views on Christian nurture developed in reaction to revivalism and to the individualism of the Victorian era, the broader context of his work was a society influenced by Jean-Jacques Rousseau's views on the innate goodness of children.¹¹⁹ Thus despite opposition from his more theologically conservative critics, Bushnell's views "soon came to dominate Protestant conceptions" of children and childhood.¹²⁰

The Contemporary Period

Despite the weaknesses of Bushnell's views, particularly his belief that good Christian nurture always produced good children and thus could solve

¹¹²Bendroth, 360.

¹¹³See William R. Adamson, *Bushnell Rediscovered* (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1966), 90-95; Barbara Cross, *Horace Bushnell: Minister to Changing America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 126-130; H. Shelton Smith, *Changing Conceptions of Original Sin* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), 144-163; Berryman, 153.

¹¹⁴Weigle, 35. For a detailed exposition of Bushnell's doctrine of sin, see also Smith, 144-163.

¹¹⁵Bushnell, 101-102.

¹¹⁶Bendroth, 362.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 358; cf. Bushnell, 44-45 and 248, who writes that the mother "gives them [the children] a great mark of honor, and sets them in a way of great hope and preferment, as regards all highest character."

¹¹⁸Brekus, 325; cf. Bushnell, 211-215.

¹¹⁹Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) was a French philosopher and writer. His novel *Émile* became a groundbreaking work on children's education during the Enlightenment era. For a careful study of Rousseau's views regarding human nature, see James Delaney, *Rousseau and the Ethics of Virtue* (New York: Continuum, 2006).

¹²⁰Bendroth, 350.

the problems of humanity,¹²¹ the contemporary view that the family plays a critical role in faith formation of children owes much to Bushnell.¹²² His work provided the impetus for the religious-education movement of the twentieth century, which incorporated the principles of child growth and development emerging from psychological research and contributed to a growing understanding of children's spiritual formation.¹²³

While the twentieth century was marked by burgeoning interest in the education and Christian formation of children,¹²⁴ the twenty-first century has seen an escalation of interest in the theology of children and childhood. Marcia Bunge, a theologian at Valparaiso University, Indiana, and editor of two seminal works, *The Child in Christian Thought* and *The Child in the Bible*, has been instrumental in the rediscovery of this area of theology. Reflecting on the "narrow and even destructive" ways in which Christian theologians have depicted children and childhood through history, she challenges contemporary Christian thinkers to "retriev[e] a broader, richer, and more complex picture of children."¹²⁵ She suggests that the Scriptures and Christian tradition offer six seemingly paradoxical "ways of speaking about the nature of children," which, when "held in tension," can provide a richer understanding of children and adult responsibilities to them.¹²⁶ While children are "gifts of God and sources of joy," they are also "sinful creatures and moral agents," and are born into a brokenness that makes them less than what God intended for them to be. Children are also "developing beings who need instruction and guidance"; however, this must be held in tension with the biblical teaching that they are "fully human and made in the image of God." In addition, Jesus taught that children are "models of faith and sources of inspiration"; yet, simultaneously, they are also "orphans, neighbors, and strangers in need of justice and compassion."¹²⁷ Unless the

¹²¹See Smith, 144-149, for an account of various theologians who responded critically to Bushnell.

¹²²Marcia Bunge, "Introduction," in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 22.

¹²³Many contemporary educators consider Bushnell to be the undisputed "Father of Modern Christian Education" in America. See E. A. Daniel and J. W. Wade, eds., *Foundation for Christian Education* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1999), 55; cf. Michael J. Anthony and Warren Benson, *Exploring the History and Philosophy of Christian Education: Principles for the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003), 326.

¹²⁴For a concise overview of twentieth-century developments in religious education, see Maria Harris and Gabriel Moran, *Reshaping Religious Education: Conversations on Contemporary Practice* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998).

¹²⁵Marcia Bunge, "Historical Perspectives on Children in the Church," in *Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives, Research and Applications*, ed. Donald Ratcliffe (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2004), 44.

¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷Ibid, 45-50.

paradoxes of all six perspectives are held in tension, suggests Bunge, we “risk treating [children] in inadequate and harmful ways.”¹²⁸

Thus perspectives on children have undergone dramatic changes in the past two millennia of Christian tradition. In the earliest decades of the Christian church, perspectives on children were predominantly positive, and the innocence of children was emphasized. Further, at a time when children lived on the margins of society, the evidence suggests that the Christian church welcomed children as equal members of the faith community. With the doctrine of original sin, however, came an emphasis on the sinfulness and moral responsibility of children, resulting in both inadequate and destructive ways of thinking about children. An attempt to reject the perspective that sees children as sinful, however, gave rise to two distinct challenges: (1) the theological challenge of an age of accountability; and (2) a more naturalistic view that a child can grow into faith through adequate Christian nurture, negating the need for an encounter with the living Christ. In contrast, the contemporary perspective on children “primarily as gifts of God and models of faith” can result in a neglect of their moral and spiritual formation.¹²⁹ Christian history gives evidence to the inadequacy of a “narrow” view of children, and to the need for the “broad” and “complex” perspective, such as suggested by Bunge.¹³⁰

Toward a Seventh-day Adventist Perspective on Children

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a rich history of ministry to and with children; however, there has been little theological reflection about the nature of children and their spiritual formation among Adventist theologians.¹³¹ Thus a carefully articulated theology of children and childhood has not always been the foundation for ministry with children in the Adventist Church. As a result, Adventist parents and those involved in ministry with children have at times reached out to non-Adventist sources, without realizing the theological underpinnings of these sources.¹³² The premise of this article is that the practice of ministry with children within an Adventist context should flow out of an Adventist theology. The remainder of this paper will utilize Bunge’s “six ways of speaking about the nature of children”¹³³ as a framework for exploring an Adventist perspective on children.

¹²⁸Ibid, 50.

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰Ibid., 44.

¹³¹Despite careful research, we have been unable to locate any significant work on this topic.

¹³²Many Adventists have embraced the popular parenting program, “Growing Kids God’s Way,” which is based on Calvinist presuppositions, and thus is not always congruent with an Adventist understanding of parent-child relationships.

¹³³Bunge, “Historical Perspectives on Children in the Church,” 44.

Gifts of God and Sources of Joy versus
Sinful Creatures and Moral Agents

From Scripture, it is evident that children are a sign of God's blessing on humanity, as well as sources of joy and delight; however, children are also born into a brokenness that makes them less than what God intended for them to be. Contemporary understandings of children's developmental needs might seem to imply that speaking about children's sinfulness is more destructive than helpful. Indeed the historical emphasis on children as sinful and morally responsible has often "warped Christian approaches to children";¹³⁴ however, the Scriptures do teach the universality of human sin.¹³⁵ Thus, as Bunge suggests, "the notion that children are sinful is worth revisiting and critically retrieving."¹³⁶

Although Adventists reject a purely Augustinian conception of original sin, the official teaching of the church affirms that Adam's sin "resulted in the condition of estrangement from God in which every human being is born. This estrangement involves an inherent tendency to commit sin."¹³⁷ This must, of necessity, include children. Despite much discussion regarding the nature of humanity, however, little of the contemporary Adventist debate has pertained directly to children. Thus Adventism does not have a complete or systematic theology of the nature of children. Early Adventists had diverse views on the innocence versus sinfulness of infants. James White, one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, maintained that Adventists had "no settled faith on this point,"¹³⁸ and given that the Scriptures were silent on this topic, "no possible good" could come from such discussions.¹³⁹ White's counsel did not, however, deter others from commenting on this subject. Uriah Smith suggested that the law had "no claim on infants; for they never transgressed it,"¹⁴⁰ and thus, he believed, infants would be saved even though they "[died] in Adam" like the rest of humanity.¹⁴¹ Similarly, G. W. Morse suggested that children who died prior to reaching the age of accountability would be saved,

¹³⁴Marcia J. Bunge, "The Dignity and Complexity of Children: Constructing Christian Theologies of Childhood," in *Nurturing Child and Adolescent Spirituality: Perspectives from the World's Religious Traditions*, ed. Karen-Marie Yust (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), 59.

¹³⁵See, e.g., Rom 5:12, 19; Gal 5:17; Eph 2:3.

¹³⁶Bunge, "Historical Perspectives on Children in the Church," 46.

¹³⁷*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1966), s.v. "Sin;" cf. J. M. Fowler, "Sin," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 265; A. E. Cairus, "The Doctrine of Man," in *ibid.*, 216-217, 226.

¹³⁸James White, "Questions and Answers," *Review and Herald* 21/4, 23 December 1862, 29.

¹³⁹James White, "Matthew 18:1-6," *Review and Herald* 18/21, 22 October 1861, 164.

¹⁴⁰Uriah Smith, "The Resurrection," *Review and Herald* 62/3, 20 January 1885, 48.

¹⁴¹Uriah Smith, "To Correspondents," *Review and Herald* 47/17, 17 April 1876, 133.

as they had no sins for which they were personally accountable.¹⁴² A significant contribution to the discussion on the nature of children transpired within the debate about infant baptism. In a similar vein to the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century, J. H. Waggoner suggested that infants who had committed no sin did not need baptism for the purpose of washing away original sin and were saved through “the Gospel.”¹⁴³ He wrote, “The death of Christ avails for them without conditions, because they have committed no sin.”¹⁴⁴ This teaching appears to have been affirmed by Ellen White, the wife of James White and also one of the founders of Adventism, in her words regarding the resurrection of infants:

As the little infants come forth immortal from their dusty beds, they immediately wing their way to their mothers’ arms. They meet again nevermore to part. But many of the little ones have no mother there. We listen in vain for the rapturous song of triumph from the mother. The angels receive the motherless infants and conduct them to the tree of life.¹⁴⁵

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has traditionally heeded James White’s advice, and has adopted no official position on the innocence of infants and children. However, although, on one hand, Adventists affirm that every human being is born with an innate tendency to evil, on the other, they reject a purely Augustinian notion of original sin. This potentially presents Adventists with two theological challenges. First, if children are considered innocent, and thus are not baptized as infants, what is their status in the church? Should they “be considered simply as pagans, until they make a positive voluntary commitment?”¹⁴⁶ Should unbaptized children be just spectators during worship services, or should they be taught alongside the adults and occasionally called on to serve, as was the practice in the early church? Should they partake in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, or should they be excluded on the basis that “that which is holy” should not be given “to the dogs?”¹⁴⁷ This lack of theological clarity regarding the status of unbaptized Adventist children has

¹⁴²G. W. Morse, “Scripture Questions,” *Review and Herald* 65/32, 7 August 1888, 506.

¹⁴³J. H. Waggoner, “Thoughts on Baptism,” *Review and Herald* 51/12, 21 March 1878, 89.

¹⁴⁴J. H. Waggoner, “Infantile Logic,” *Signs of the Times* 5/15, 10 April 1879, 116.

¹⁴⁵E. G. White, *Selected Messages* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 1958), 2:260.

¹⁴⁶G. Vandervelde, “Believers Church Ecclesiology as Ecumenical Challenge,” in *The Believers Church: A Voluntary Church*, ed. W. H. Brackney (Kitchener, ONT: Pandora), 213, cited in Holly Catterton Allen, “Theological Perspectives on Children in the Church: Anabaptist/Believers Church,” in *Nurturing Children’s Spirituality* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2008), 118.

¹⁴⁷The earliest surviving church manual, dating from early in the second century A.D., says: “let no one eat or drink from your eucharist except those baptized in the name of [the] Lord, for the Lord has likewise said concerning this: ‘Do not give what is holy to the dogs’” (*Didache* 9:5 in *The Didache: Text, Translation, Analysis, and Commentary*, trans. and ed. Aaron Milavec [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004], 23).

resulted in their exclusion from participation in the Lord's Supper, despite the assertion that Adventists practice "open Communion."¹⁴⁸

Second, if children are born with "tendencies to evil"¹⁴⁹ but are innocent until some later age when they are considered accountable for actual sin, "one is left with the conundrum of discovering what that age is."¹⁵⁰ Although this poses a theological challenge for Adventists, the concept of an age of accountability does appear to be grounded in the Scriptures, which teach that "Regarding matters of salvation," children are different from adults.¹⁵¹ The apostle Paul recognized this differentiation when he wrote, "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I put childish ways behind me" (1 Cor 13:11). Several OT passages also make a distinction between children and adults, based on developmental differences in moral reasoning and discernment. Moses speaks of children as those "who today do not yet know right from wrong" (Deut 1:39).¹⁵² Similarly, Isaiah speaks of a time in children's lives when they do not yet know "enough to reject the wrong and choose the right" (Isa 7:16).

Early Adventists also referred to a "time of . . . personal accountability"¹⁵³ or "years of accountability."¹⁵⁴ Although they did not identify an exact age, Ellen White suggested that "Children of eight, ten or twelve years" were "old enough to be addressed on the subject of personal religion."¹⁵⁵ Although it may not be possible to identify an exact age of accountability for all children, it is evident that, as they grow, children are increasingly capable of self-centered actions that are hurtful to others, as well as to themselves. Even Christian parents often see these actions only within a context of the psychosocial and

¹⁴⁸*Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005), 85. A discussion was initiated in 2007 on the pages of *Ministry* magazine regarding children's participation in the Lord's Supper. Two opposing views were presented and the editors left readers to draw their own conclusions (see Darius Jankiewicz, "The Lord's Supper and Children's Participation," *Ministry*, June 2007, 11-15; and Robert Johnston, "Unbaptized Children and Communion," *Ministry*, June 2007, 15).

¹⁴⁹E. G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 2004), 373.

¹⁵⁰Allen, 118.

¹⁵¹Klaus Issler, "Biblical Perspectives on Developmental Grace for Nurturing Children's Spirituality," in *Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives, Research, and Applications*, ed. Donald Ratcliff (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2004), 54.

¹⁵²Moses spoke these words to the Israelites when predicting that with the exception of their children and Joshua and Caleb, they would all die in the wilderness. Interestingly, Num 14:28-31 confirms that all those twenty years and older did indeed die without entering the Promised Land, which would seem to imply that those below the age of twenty were considered to "not yet know right from wrong" (Deut 1:39).

¹⁵³G. W. Morse, "Scripture Questions," *Review and Herald* 65/32, 7 August 1888, 506.

¹⁵⁴Ellen White, *Early Writings* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1945), 278.

¹⁵⁵Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1948), 1:400.

developmental limitations of children; however, it is important that adults be aware of children's capacity for sin, and, in developmentally appropriate ways, "help them to understand the impact of their actions," and, over time, to "accept growing [moral] responsibility for them."¹⁵⁶ Ellen White concurs, stating that even "very young children may have correct views of their state as sinners and of the way of salvation through Christ."¹⁵⁷ Within this context, however, it is also important to remember that the sinfulness of children cannot be equated with the sinfulness of adults. Children "do not need as much help to love God and neighbor." Neither have they yet "developed [the] negative thoughts and feelings that reinforce [the] destructive behaviors" of adults. Thus children should be treated gently.¹⁵⁸ In conclusion, whenever the sinfulness and moral responsibility of children are considered, it is important to hold these in tension with the scriptural teaching that children are a sign of God's blessing on humanity, as well as sources of joy and delight.¹⁵⁹

Fully Human and Made in the Image of God
versus Developing Beings Who Need
Instruction and Guidance

Children are human beings created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27). Christian tradition has not always recognized this, and language such as "almost human," "beasts," and "on their way to becoming human" has been used within church tradition to describe children.¹⁶⁰ The Scriptures, however, appear to suggest that children do not "grow up into" the image of God once they reach adulthood; rather, "Everything that the image of God is, every child is."¹⁶¹ Consequently, every child, regardless of gender, race, or social status, has dignity in the eyes of God and is "worthy of respect."¹⁶² While children are fully human and made in the image of God, they are also "developing beings" who are "on their way" to adulthood. Thus there is much that children need to learn from the caring adults in their lives.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁶Stonehouse and May, 17.

¹⁵⁷Ellen White, *Child Guidance* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 1982), 491.

¹⁵⁸Bunge, "Historical Perspectives on Children in the Church," 47.

¹⁵⁹Stonehouse and May, 17.

¹⁶⁰Bunge, "Historical Perspectives on Children in the Church," 48-49.

¹⁶¹Fretheim, "God Was With the Boy' (Genesis 21:20)," 4. Fretheim asserts: "This point is made clear in Genesis 5:1-3, the beginning of the genealogy of Adam. After noting that male and female were created in the image of God, the genealogical structure of this chapter makes God the 'father' of Adam. Genesis 5:3 then states: 'When Adam had lived 130 years, he became the father of a son in his likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth.' Human beings are now the ones who create further images of God. In other words: this first generation of children is created in the image of God (even after the fall into sin)" (*ibid.*, emphasis original).

¹⁶²Bunge, "Historical Perspectives on Children in the Church," 49.

¹⁶³*Ibid.*, 48.

The Scriptures are replete with the theme of adult responsibility to guide and nurture children in the way of the Lord.¹⁶⁴ Accordingly, various theologians in Christian history, including Luther, Wesley, and Bushnell, have stressed the importance of instructing and guiding children. The Adventist perspective, influenced by the writings of Ellen White, also has a rich tradition of emphasizing the scriptural mandate to teach and nurture young children.¹⁶⁵ White writes: “How interestedly the Lord Jesus knocks at the door of families where there are little children to be educated and trained! How gently he watches over the mothers’ interest, and how sad He feels to see children neglected.”¹⁶⁶ White also stresses the value of “the early training of children,” stating that “The lessons learned, the habits formed” during early childhood “have more to do with the formation of the character and the direction of the life than have all the instruction and training of the after years.”¹⁶⁷ This appears to be in line with current research, which suggests that discipleship needs to be intentional in the earliest years, as a child’s worldview is basically established by age nine.¹⁶⁸

Having affirmed the importance of guidance and instruction, however, the theological questions that Adventists need to consider are, How does a child become a Christian? How significant is parental influence? Horace Bushnell asserted that parental influence was everything, and that it was the “bad spot[s]” in parental “morality” that could “more or less fatally corrupt their children.”¹⁶⁹ Similarly, Ellen White writes that children’s “salvation depends largely upon the education given them in childhood,”¹⁷⁰ upon the parental “course of action.”¹⁷¹ Without detracting from the need for and importance of Christian nurture, it is imperative to also acknowledge the work of the Holy Spirit in children’s lives. Children need opportunities to meet God through the stories of Scripture and to experience his love through relationships with the people in their lives; however, ultimately, they must also be “born again” (John 3:3). If, as Bushnell suggests, children grow up

¹⁶⁴See the sections on the biblical perspectives on children, above.

¹⁶⁵This includes the second largest denominational formal education system, as well as comprehensive Sabbath School, Pathfinder, and Adventurer curricula (the latter two organizations are scouting clubs for Adventist children).

¹⁶⁶Ellen White, *That I May Know Him* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 2003), 39.

¹⁶⁷White, *Ministry of Healing*, 380.

¹⁶⁸George Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions: Why Children Should be Your Church’s #1 Priority* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2003), 47.

¹⁶⁹Bushnell, *Christian Nurture*, 224.

¹⁷⁰White, *Child Guidance*, 27.

¹⁷¹*Ibid.*, 33. White’s understanding of Christian nurture appears in many ways, similar to that of her contemporary, Bushnell. These similarities, however, may have different implications in the framework of their overall theologies. Further study is needed to examine these similarities and differences.

Christian and never know themselves as being otherwise, they may not fully recognize their sinfulness and, thus, their need for grace. In contrast, Ellen White recognized the need for children to experience conversion, suggesting that once parents were “satisfied” that their children understood “the meaning of conversion” and were “truly converted” they could be baptized; however, she continued to stress parental responsibility for the nurture of children, even after this point. She wrote: “If you consent to the baptism of your children and then leave them to do as they choose, feeling no special duty to keep their feet in the straight path, you yourselves are responsible if they lose faith and courage and interest in the truth.”¹⁷² This may be indicative of her recognition that a childhood conversion experience was based on an immature understanding of sin, forgiveness, and salvation, and that ongoing nurture was needed, in order for childhood faith to grow and eventually mature into adult faith.¹⁷³

Although parental nurture prepares children to claim faith as their own, it is also important to acknowledge that “the complex influences” on children’s choices are rarely limited to “parental actions” alone.¹⁷⁴ Could it be that the potentially devastating psychological implications of overconfidence in the parental role contributes to the ambivalence parents feel toward their responsibility for the spiritual nurture of their children?¹⁷⁵ Might not a stronger theology of children and parenting empower parents to provide the nurture their children need? However, it is essential to remember that a discussion of adult commitment to provide children with instruction and guidance must be held in tension with the scriptural teaching that all children

¹⁷²Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Churches*, 6:94-95.

¹⁷³For a discussion of childhood conversion and development of mature faith, see Donna J. Habenicht, *How to Help Your Child Really Love Jesus* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1994), 121-126; cf. Stonehouse and May, 91-106.

¹⁷⁴Donald and Brenda Ratcliff, *Childfaith: Experiencing God and Spiritual Growth with Your Children* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2010), 174; cf. Ross A. Thompson, M. Ann Easterbrooks, and Laura M. Padilla-Walker, “Social and Emotional Developments in Infancy,” in *Handbook of Psychology*, ed. Richard M. Lerner (New York: Wiley, 2003), 103.

¹⁷⁵Statistics of Adventist parents may differ somewhat; however, surveys of American Christians reveal that although eighty-five percent of parents believe that they are primarily responsible for the spiritual nurture of their children, over two-thirds of them “abdicate that responsibility to the church.” In an average week, fewer than ten percent of church-going Christian parents read the Bible, pray (other than at meal times), or participate in a service activity together with their children. Furthermore, in an average month, only five percent of families experience worship together, other than at church. Barna, 77-78, suggests that one of the reasons for this “apparent contradiction” between what parents say they believe about their responsibility and their practice is their sense of inadequacy. Feeling ill-equipped to fulfill their obligations to their children, parents have convinced themselves that the best solution is for them to “get out of the way” and allow those “who are more skilled in spiritual matters” to provide the guidance and direction their children need.

are fully human and made in the image of God, and thus “are to be respected from the beginning of life.”¹⁷⁶

Models of Faith and Sources of Revelation versus Orphans,
Neighbors, and Strangers in Need of Justice
and Compassion

Jesus’ teaching that adults should learn from children not only how to “enter the kingdom of heaven” (Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17), but also how to be the “greatest in the kingdom of God” (Matt 18:1-5; Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-48), is as radical today as it was in the first century A.D. Adventist scholar Calvin Rock affirms that children are “teaching partners” within the family.¹⁷⁷ However, the perspective that adults can learn from children is an undeveloped paradigm in the Adventist Church. Generally, adults have considered children as needing to learn from them, rather than *vice versa*. Accordingly, Christian educator John Westerhoff suggests that adults have tended to view children in one of two ways: (1) a “production line,” in which children are seen as “valuable raw material,” who, with appropriate instruction and training, can be molded to a “predetermined design” (the emphasis is on what adults do *to* children); and (2) a “greenhouse,” in which children are “valuable seeds,” which, when cared for and nourished, can grow up to reach their potential (the emphasis is on what adults do *for* children).¹⁷⁸ Neither of these metaphors, Westerhoff suggests, is adequate for construing the relationship between children and adults. Instead he challenges adults to think of themselves as “co-pilgrims” on a journey “with” children.¹⁷⁹

What is it that children can teach adults about spirituality? Westerhoff suggests that although the apostle Paul recommends that adults give up being “childish,” Jesus challenges them to become more “childlike.” By spending time *with* children, adults can learn the spiritual values of interdependence, of “being” rather than doing, and of intuitive ways of thinking.¹⁸⁰ Through shared experiences “in nature, the arts, and communal rituals,” adults and children

¹⁷⁶Bunge, “Historical Perspectives on Children in the Church,” 49.

¹⁷⁷Calvin Rock, “Marriage and Family,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 2000), 732. Citing from the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Rock, *ibid.*, writes: “It is said of Enoch that he walked with God ‘after the birth of Methuselah’ (Gen. 5:21-22). Though this statement does not imply that Enoch had been an ungodly individual before the birth of his son, ‘with the arrival of a son to grace his home he understood through experience the depth of a father’s love and the confidence of a helpless baby. As never before he was drawn to God, his own heavenly Father’” (cf. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* [Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1953], 1:246).

¹⁷⁸J. Westerhoff, “The Church’s Contemporary Challenge: Assisting Adults to Mature Spiritually *With* Their Children,” in *Nurturing Children’s Spirituality: Christian Perspectives and Best Practices*, ed. H. Catterton Allen (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2008), 356.

¹⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 359.

¹⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 361-363.

can learn from one another and together move toward spiritual maturity.¹⁸¹ Similarly, in their seminal work, *Listening to Children on the Spiritual Journey*, Stonehouse and May challenge adults to take the time to listen to children's "reflections on life," to recognize "the working of God's grace" in their lives, and to "listen and watch for what God may show us through them."¹⁸²

While Jesus challenged adults to see children as models of faith and sources of revelation, the Scriptures also teach that children are orphans, neighbors, and strangers in need of justice and compassion. In a world where annually ten million children die of "easily preventable" causes, and where "children's sex trafficking, sweatshops and soldiering" have burgeoned,¹⁸³ Christians are not only called to care for their own children, to whom their "devotion is limitless," but they are also called to be attentive to the needs of the children "at the edge of [their] passion."¹⁸⁴ In doing so, they "join Jesus in fulfilling his mission" of bringing good news to the poor and freedom for the prisoners (Luke 4:18-19).¹⁸⁵

Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this article was to begin to articulate a Seventh-day Adventist theology of children and childhood and to explore the implication of such a theology for the practice of ministry with children within a broader Adventist theological context. It appears that the Scriptures and Christian tradition offer rich perspectives on children and childhood that have not been fully explored or clearly articulated within the Adventist theological tradition. Additionally, Ellen White's writings do not appear to have been systematically examined for a theology of children and childhood or parenting. As a result, ministry to children and parents has often been considered incidental rather than central to the mission of the church, with the result that many of the intellectual and financial resources of the church have been utilized in adult evangelism, which has appeared to bring more immediate rewards.

This article is, therefore, an incipient contribution to encourage Seventh-day Adventist thought leaders to build a strong and careful theology of children. More in-depth investigation and analysis of the scriptural and historical material dealing with children and childhood, including that of Ellen White, should follow. Intentional development of a strong Adventist theology could have at least two positive implications:

First, it could empower Adventist parents in their task of building strong, lifelong familial bonds with their children. This, in turn, would provide an

¹⁸¹Ibid., 365.

¹⁸²Stonehouse and May, 12-16.

¹⁸³John Wall, *Ethics in Light of Childhood* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2010), 2.

¹⁸⁴Walter Brueggemann, "Vulnerable Children, Divine Passion, and Human Obligation," in *The Child in the Bible*, ed. Marcia Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 419.

¹⁸⁵Stonehouse and May, 18.

environment conducive to children growing up in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. If indeed, as current research suggests, a child's worldview is basically formed by age nine,¹⁸⁶ empowering parents through a strong theology of children takes on added urgency.

Second, a strong theology of childhood could raise the consciousness of the presence and importance of children, as well as the profile of children's ministry in local congregations. It is a well-established fact that nominating committees in many local congregations struggle to find people either willing or able to minister to children. While there are exceptions, those who eventually agree to take up such positions often feel coerced and ill equipped. A greater regard for ministry to and with children would make it easier to identify and train individuals who could fill such ministry positions. A strong theology of children could result in improved development and dissemination of uniquely Adventist parenting and children's faith-formation resources and could ultimately help close the proverbial "back door" through which the Adventist Church loses so many young people.

¹⁸⁶Thus Barna, 47, writes: "The implications of these findings [that basic worldview is established by age nine] is clear: Anyone who wishes to have significant influence on the development of a person's moral and spiritual foundations had better exert that influence while the person is still open-minded and impressionable—in other words, while the person is still young. By waiting until a person is in his or her late adolescent or teenage years, the nature of influential attempts must be significantly different because the spiritual foundation has already been formed and integrated into the person's life. . . . The older a person gets, the more difficult it is for him or her to replace existing spiritual and moral pillars."

**RITE FROM THE VERY BEGINNING: RITES
OF PASSAGE IN LUKE 1–4 AND THEIR
FUNCTION IN THE NARRATIVE
OF LUKE-ACTS**

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Half a century ago in his influential work, *The Theology of St. Luke*, Hans Conzelmann observed that “The three scenes which mark the main stages in Jesus’ ministry—the Baptism, the Transfiguration and the Agony in the Garden—are assimilated to one another. On each of the three occasions a heavenly revelation is depicted as the answer to prayer.”¹ While the details of Lukan stages have long been debated, Conzelmann’s observation about the significance of such scenes remains of interest. Indeed, as this paper will argue, such divinely visited transitional events are particularly prevalent in chapters 1–4 and serve several purposes in the third Gospel.

Over the past century, the events associated with life transitions have received considerable attention under the rubric of rites of passage. For the purposes of this essay, a rite of passage will be understood as a formal process rooted in tradition, which marks the transition of an individual or group from one culturally determined state or station in life to another. Such a rite often involves, to one degree or another, a separation from the old, a liminal or in-between stage, and a reincorporation into a new state or station.² As a modern construct, the application of rite-of-passage theory to ancient texts requires careful attention to similarities and differences between model

¹Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke*, trans. Geoffrey Buswell (New York: Harper, 1960), 180.

²This definition is created in dialogue with the works of Arnold van Gennep (*The Rites of Passage*, trans. M. B. Vizedom and G. L. Caffee [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960], 2-3, 10), Victor W. Turner (*Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967], 7; and “Forms of Symbolic Action: Introduction,” in *Forms of Symbolic Action: Proceedings of the 1969 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society*, ed. R. F. Spender [Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969], 94), and Catherine Bell (*Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1997], 138-169). Bell, 138-169, and Ronald L. Grimes (*Ritual Criticism: Case Studies in Its Practice, Essays on Its Theory* [Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990], 12-14; and *Reading, Writing, and Ritualizing: Ritual in Fictive, Liturgical, and Public Places* [Washington, DC: Pastoral Press, 1993], 7-10) correctly point out that a particular ritual may not evidence all of these characteristics, and that there are in reality no precise lines separating ritual from nonritual. Ceremonial rites, in contrast, though regularly patterned and formal, are celebrated on a calendrical basis rather than at irregular societally ordained points of transition.

and literary account, yet bringing similar events together in this way allows for observations not easily gained by other means.³

Rites of passage have been widely observed in the lives and literature of diverse cultures across space and time. In the Jewish and Greco-Roman world of the first and second centuries C.E., little was done without proper ritual.⁴ Societally ordained rites of passage accompanied an individual's movement into each new stage of the human life cycle from infancy and puberty, to betrothal and marriage, to the final funereal good-byes.⁵ Transitional rites also marked changes in role, ushering individuals into offices of authority such as priesthood or governorship.⁶ In addition, men and women of broadly differing social levels often underwent voluntary rites such as initiation into a mystery religion or rituals promising healing from disease.⁷

The prevalence of rites of passage in Luke's time is well documented; yet, in fact, narrative literature of the period tends to generally ignore or gloss over "routine" passage rites unless there was some pressing reason for their inclusion.⁸ It is all the more remarkable, then, that the opening chapters

³See, e.g., Andrea Fisher, "The Relationship of Individual and Society in Victor Turner's *The Ritual Process*," *Journal of Anthropology* 1 (1978): 37-38; Jerry D. Moore, *Visions of Culture. An Introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists* (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira, 1997), 229; Victor W. Turner, "African Ritual and Western Literature: Is a Comparative Symbolology Possible?" in *The Literature of Fact: Selected Papers from the English Institute*, ed. A. Fletcher (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 45-81.

⁴In general in this essay, the term "ritual" will be used to refer to a generic type of ritual, while rite will refer to a specific instance of its practice.

⁵See, e.g., Gen 17:10-14; Josephus, *Ant.* 2.238-2.274; *C. Ap.* 2:205; Suetonius, *Nero* 6; Ovid, *Fast.* 3.771-790; Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 10.116; Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, trans. J. Raffan (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 262-263; Fanny L. Dolansky, "Coming of Age in Rome: The History and Social Significance of Assuming the *Toga Virilis*," (MA thesis, University of Victoria, 1999); Mary Harlow, and Ray Laurence, *Growing Up and Growing Old in Ancient Rome: A Life Course Approach* (London: Routledge, 2002), 3-4, 37-42, 60-64, 138-143; Nigel M. Kennell, *The Gymnasium of Virtue: Education and Culture in Ancient Sparta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 38, 144-146; Paul Monroe, *Source Book of the History of Education for the Greek and Roman Period* (New York: Macmillan, 1902), 302.

⁶See, e.g., Exod 28-29; 40:13-16; Lev 8:1-9:24; Plutarch, *Num.* 7.3-8.3; idem, *Art.* 3.1-4; Suetonius, *Nero* 6.7-8.

⁷See, e.g., Dio Chrysostom, *Dei cogn.* 33; Hippolytus, *Haer.* 5.8; Clement of Alexandria, *Protr.* 2.21; Walter Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987); Emma J. L. Edelstein and Ludwig Edelstein, *Asclepius: Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1998); Carin M. C. Green, *Roman Religion and the Cult of Diana at Aricia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 235-280.

⁸In the writings of Plutarch and Suetonius, e.g., the routine rites of passage are seldom mentioned, even though the ubiquity is well attested in other literature of the time.

of Luke contain such a heavy concentration of these rites, some of which reverberate through the remaining chapters of the whole two-volume work of Luke-Acts. In the remarks that follow, rituals in Luke 1–4 will be brought together and examined and their relation to Luke-Acts as a whole briefly considered. Rite-of-passage accounts in other narrative literature of Luke’s day will then be explored with a view to understanding the reasons for Luke’s particular interest in these rites.

Rites of Passage Highlighted in Luke 1–4

The Lukan narrative opens in the midst of a divinely visited ritual—not a rite of passage, but a regularly occurring ceremony of incense-burning conducted by Zacharias in the temple that takes on the meaning of rite. It is during this rite that Gabriel appears from heaven, promising the birth of a son who would “make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:16, 17; cf. Exod 30:7-8; 2 Chron 13:11). The scene portraying this son’s welcome is set in the midst of a full-fledged rite of passage, as joyful neighbors and kin gather for the traditional eighth-day-circumcision ritual, marking the transition of John’s birth and acceptance into the covenant people of God (Luke 2:57-59). Luke couples this divinely ordained Jewish rite (Lev 12:3) with the formal naming of the child, an important aspect of the Roman birthing rites familiar to Luke’s audience and performed here by divine command (Luke 1:13, 59-64).⁹ As in the transitions noted by Conzelmann, divine interaction accompanies the rite, for Zacharias is filled with the Holy Spirit and, blessing God, prophesies of his son’s future work (1:67-79; see **Figure 1**).

An eighth-day-circumcision rite, accompanied by a divinely directed naming (2:21; 1:31), is also noted in the account of Jesus’ birth. In Jesus’ case, however, these rites are overshadowed by a second pair of passage rites that receive greater attention. These, a purification rite and a rite of presentation, take place in the temple and, like the first two, reflect earlier traditions (Luke 2:21-24; Exod 13:2, 12; Lev 12:2-8; 1 Sam 1:24-28).

Luke 2:23 quotes Exod 13:2, 12, explicitly interpreting Jesus’ presentation at the temple as a response to God’s command at the first “Passover” that every firstborn male be set apart as “holy to the Lord.” According to the Pentateuch, while firstborn oxen, sheep, and goats were to be sacrificed, human first borns, who, like Jesus, were not of the tribe of Levi, were to be “redeemed” with a payment of five shekels (Exod 13:11-16; Num 3:47-48; 18:15-16). There is no specific requirement in the Pentateuch, however, for a formal presentation at the temple itself. Luke’s specific mention of a ritual presentation with no redemption price, therefore, may represent a

⁹Harlow and Laurence, 39-40. It is later also attested in Jewish literature. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I, 1–9*, AB 28a (New York: Doubleday, 1981), 380.

formal enactment of Gabriel's declaration that Jesus would be a "holy child," remaining sacred to the Lord.¹⁰ Indeed, although the purification law Luke cites specifically required purification only for the mother (Lev 12:1-8), Luke speaks in the plural of "their" purification [τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ αὐτῶν]. Such purification would have been appropriate for one being set apart as sacred. As François Bovon notes, a similar ritual was to be enacted in certain cases for the purification of the Nazirite set apart as holy to the Lord (Num 6:1-12).¹¹ These rites, too, become the occasion of divine in-breaking, as the Holy Spirit reveals to two righteous prophets the special nature of the child. As with Zacharias, Simeon and Anna, too, turn to God with words of praise.

The ritual account concludes with the statement that, when the family "had completed (ἐτέλεσαν) everything according to the law of the Lord," they returned to Nazareth (Luke 2:39). The use of τελέω in this verse appears to be the first of several related technical ritual usages in Luke-Acts, which, in common with many other Greco-Roman texts, note the successful performance of sacred ritual.¹²

The infancy narrative ends, as it began, with a regularly patterned temple ceremony. In this case, the ceremony is the Passover in Jerusalem, to which, "when He became *twelve* they went up according to the *custom* of the Feast" (2:42). This specific notice of Jesus' age raises the possibility that, in addition to the Passover ceremony, a ritual of transition to young manhood is in view here, for several early Rabbinic passages suggest that it was at the age of twelve that young men were considered to have reached the standing of full responsibility before God.¹³ The possibility that Luke either knew of a formal marking of this transition (which we no longer have witness to), or

¹⁰No requirement of a presentation at the Temple is recorded in connection with the exodus command in the Hebrew Bible, the LXX, or the Mishnah. See Raymond E. Brown, "The Presentation of Jesus (Luke 2:22-40)," *Worship* 51 (1977): 2-11; François Bovon, *Luke I, 1:1-9:50*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 99; Fitzmyer, 425-426. The English translations of biblical texts throughout are my own.

¹¹Bovon, 99.

¹²Luke 12:50. See also the use of συντελέω in Luke 4:2, 13 to describe Jesus' successful completion of the ordeals that followed his baptism, and in Acts 21:27 of the completion of the sacred time of Pentecost. Cf. Plutarch, *Art.* 3.1; idem, *Flam.* 2.1; Philo, *Spec.* 1.319; idem, *Decal.* 41; idem, *Contemp.* 25; τελέω, *BDAG*, 997; τελέω, *LSJ*, 1771-1772; Walter Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 9. Mark does not use this term at all, while Matthew uses it with the more common usage "to finish, or complete."

¹³*M. 'Abot* 5:21; *m. Nid.* 5:6; cf. *m. Meg.* 4:6; *b. Ketub.* 50; Str-B 2.144-147; Frédéric Manns, "Luc 2, 41-50 témoin de la Bar Mitsva de Jésus," *Mar* 40 (1978): 344-349. See also I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 126-127; Fitzmyer, 440; contra Bovon, 111. There is, however, no extant evidence of such a formal "bar mitzvah" rite during the period.

was echoing well-known Greco-Roman puberty rites, is strengthened by the fact that the portrayal of Jesus shifts at this very point from the depiction of him in a passive and thus child-like role to a decisive leading role in the narrative.¹⁴ There is no explicit mention of prayer or divine intervention here, although Jesus, in his words to his parents following the completion (τελειώω) of the Passover, does assert his recognition of a special connection with the heavenly Father: “Did you not know that I must be in the house of my Father?” (2:49).¹⁵

These birth narratives of Luke 1–2 are not mentioned in any other canonical Gospel. The events of Luke 3–4, on the other hand, are recounted in all four Gospels; yet, it is in Luke-Acts alone that they are repeatedly referenced in ways that foreground them as pivotal within the entire two-volume work.

The significance of John’s baptism—in the Lukan account the first of two interlocked rituals—is attested by an elaborate dating formula, a device often used in Greco-Roman narrative to mark transition to a major new section of narrative. Such dating formulas are also used in Jewish prophetic literature to introduce divine declaration, and indeed the coming of the word of God (ῥῆμα θεοῦ) initiates and apparently prescribes John’s ritual work, for Luke (with Mark) states that John then began “preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Luke 3:1–3; Mark 1:4).¹⁶ Though Luke thus identifies God as the source for this new rite of baptism, in this work redolent with Septuagintal associations such a practice would also have recalled the various ritual purificatory dippings (βάπτω) commanded by God in the Law (Lev 4:6, 17; 9:9; 11:32; 14:6, 16, 51; Num 19:18).¹⁷ Further, ritual immersion practices are evident in Luke’s own time, including the presence of

¹⁴Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 156. It is the family that goes up to the feast, but Jesus who speaks independently with the teachers and, as Green notes, is said to act by going down to Nazareth and submitting to his parents.

¹⁵Interestingly, a Passover rite also stands at the end of Jesus’ ministry as the setting for the institution of the ritual of the Lord’s Supper. In contrast to the use of τελέω in 2:39, τελειώω in 2:43 most likely refers to the completion of the days of the Passover, although interestingly the related words τελέωσις and τελείουμα are often used in association with the attainment of manhood and the accompanying dedication (Τελειώω, LSJ, 1770).

¹⁶Thucydides 2.2; Polybius, *The Histories*, trans. W. R. Paton, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1922), 1.3; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. Rom.* 9.61; Dan 7:1; Ezek 24:1; Hag 2:10; Zech 1:7; 7:1; Conzelmann, 168.

¹⁷Cf. Sir 34:24, 29; Jdt 12:7, 8; Mark 7:4. By the Second Temple period these rituals were often referred to with the term βαπτίζω.

mikvaot spread across first-century Palestine, along with similar traditions of water purification often formed as a part of Greco-Roman ritual.¹⁸

In response, crowds come out “to be baptized by him” (Luke 3:7), symbolically enacting their transition from “brood of vipers” to “a people prepared for the Lord,” who have fled “from the wrath to come” (1:14; 3:7; 7:29-30).¹⁹ John also promises, in addition to this physical rite, a further baptism to come, accomplished with the Holy Spirit and fire—a metaphorical baptism that becomes, later in Luke-Acts, the basis for further ritual development (3:15-17; Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8).²⁰

Luke’s separation of the events at Jesus’ baptism from John’s preaching results, in part, in the separating off of Jesus’ unique ritual experience, which Luke alone associates with a second traditional rite of passage—the rite of anointing.²¹ In 3:21-22, the act of Jesus’ baptism is syntactically subordinated to the divinely initiated events following his prayer. This ordering could be understood as simply emphasizing the divine affirmation of Jesus if not for the ritual interpretation given it in subsequent narratives, for Jesus’ ministry opens with the declaration that the Holy Spirit has *anointed* him to preach

¹⁸Adela Yarbro Collins. “The Origin of Christian Baptism,” in *Living Water, Sealing Spirit: Readings on Christian Initiation*, ed. M. E. Johnson (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1995), 52-53. In the Greco-Roman world of Luke’s audience, ritual purification was practiced in connection with initiations into the mystery cults, such as that of Lucius in *Metamorphoses* 11.23 and the young man initiated into the Bacchic rites in Livy, 39.9.4, as well as in other traditions. See also Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 4.3.1; George F. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 96, 224-285, fig. 70. Ritual cleansings are sometimes characterized as superstitious, as in Juvenal, *Sat.* 6.522ff.; and Plutarch, *Superst.* 166a. For other literature and also reliefs depicting ritual washings, see A. Oerke, “Βάπτω, Βαπτίζω,” *TDNT* 1:530-532. Other types of Jewish ritual cleansings in water at the time of Luke-Acts included the bathings at Qumran (1QS 3.4), Josephus’s mention of Bannus’s day and night washings (*Vita* 11), the Sibylline Oracles’s call to “wash your whole bodies in perennial rivers” in connection with repentance (4.165), and the cleansing/baptism of the Jewish proselyte (*M. Pesab* 8.8; *m. CEd.* 5.2).

¹⁹In fact, Luke states that “all the people” are baptized (Luke 3:21), apparently suggesting the successful carrying out of the task Gabriel had given to John to make “ready a people prepared for the Lord” (1:17; 3:4; cf. 7:29; Isa 40:3). In the re-incorporation phase of the ritual, this symbolic transition, John insists, must be actualized through appropriate acts of repentance (3:8-14).

²⁰“μετάνοια,” *BDAG* 640.

²¹This has been variously ascribed to (1) a historiographical device separating the period of the prophets from the period of Jesus (Conzelmann, 21, 26); (2) an avoidance of allowing the lesser John to baptize the mightier Jesus (Charles G. Dennison, “How Is Jesus the Son of God? Luke’s Baptism Narrative and Christology,” *CTJ* 17 [1982]: 6-25); and (3) the logical conclusion of John’s side of this final parallel (Marshall, 148-149).

the good news (Luke 4:16-21). In Acts 10:37-38, Peter makes this ritual connection more explicit, specifically stating that God *anointed* Jesus with the Holy Spirit “after the baptism which John proclaimed” (cf. Acts 4:27).

Traditionally, anointing rites were practiced at the commissioning of high priests and kings and even, occasionally, prophets.²² The act of *anointing* normally involved the pouring of oil on the candidate’s head; however, for David, the account also describes the coming of the Holy Spirit upon him (1 Sam 16:13). Thus, in addition to explicating Jesus’ title of anointed one (Christ/Messiah), this passage, by connecting the coming of the Holy Spirit to the rite of anointing, underlines the kingly connections to David already introduced in the birth narrative.²³

The significant shifts from previous tradition in the rituals of baptism and of anointing set them apart from those described in the birth narrative. Both are represented not simply as traditional ritual accompanied by divine visitation, but as a divine ritualization wherein God himself initiates a brand-new rite of passage out of the fabric of earlier traditions.

Ritual and Divine Interaction in the Rest of Luke-Acts

The beginning of Jesus’ ministry, initiated by his anointing, marks the climax of Luke 1–4’s particular emphasis on ritual beginnings, which is the main focus of this article. Viewing these early rites, however, in the context of two related and ongoing ritual patterns in the remainder of Luke-Acts will demonstrate the extent of such patterning in relation to both the baptism and anointing of Luke 3 and to divine interaction.

One ritual pattern occurring repeatedly throughout Luke-Acts is the commissioning of individuals for new roles, a pattern inaugurated by the commissioning of Jesus for his messianic role by means of the rite of anointing. The choosing of the twelve also becomes in Luke a specific appointment to apostleship to carry out a mission that, as with that of Jesus’, is gradually unfolded in the subsequent narrative (Luke 6:12-16; 24:46-49). As with the anointing of Jesus, this event, too, is set in the context of Jesus in prayer.²⁴

At the beginning of Acts, commissioning rites are described: a twelfth apostle is chosen to replace Judas (Luke 1:15-26) and, as the gospel spreads

²²For kings, see, e.g., 1 Sam 10:1; 1 Chron 11:3; 2 Kgs 11:12. For priests, see Exod 28:41 and Lev 16:32. For prophets, see 1 Kgs 19:16.

²³As with David, such expectations only begin to come to fruition later in Acts (e.g., 2:33) after Jesus’ own time of trials and suffering. In Luke, Jesus plays more of a prophetic role, as evidenced in 13:33; cf. 7:16, 26, 39; 9:8, 19; 24:19.

²⁴A different, more formulaic approach to commissioning is in view in the articles of B. J. Hubbard (“Commissioning Stories in Luke-Acts: A Study of Their Antecedents, Form and Content,” *Semeia* 8 [1977]: 103-126); and T. Y. Mullins (“New Testament Commission Forms, Especially in Luke-Acts,” *JBL* 95 [1976]: 603-614).

following Jesus' ascension, seven more are called to assist them in the work of serving (Acts 6:1-6). Paul and Barnabus, too, are commissioned at the direction of the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:1-3), at which time they begin appointing elders in every church (Acts 14:23). Finally, there is the handing over of the baton of leadership in a ritualized giving of Paul's last-will-and-testament rite with a paradigmatic group of elders from Ephesus (Acts 20:17-38).²⁵ In these more or less formalized commissioning rites, divine intervention is explicitly mentioned only twice, but subsequent events bear clear witness to the presence of divine blessing and empowerment. Prayer, on the other hand, duly noted in each case, reinforces the centrality of prayer at times of transition and ritual in Luke-Acts (see **Figure 2**).

By far the most pervasive ritual pattern in Luke-Acts, however, is the multivalent use of baptism as symbol. Mark may have pointed the way in this by placing John's baptismal preaching as "the beginning of the gospel" (Luke 1:1), but Luke-Acts goes far beyond Mark not only in portrayals of the baptism of believers in Acts, but also in the Gospel itself, where several key moments of transition in Jesus' life are linked to baptism through metaphor and verbal echo. Indeed the ritual of baptism is a major uniting factor in the entire work (see **Figure 3**).

In the Gospel of Luke, the divine origin of John's baptism receives additional affirmation in a narrative aside asserting that the Pharisees and law-experts, by not being baptized by John, had thereby "rejected God's purpose for themselves" (7:29-30).²⁶ The Lukan Gospel also includes two indirect links to this baptism. The first is embedded in the transfiguration account, which, as Conzelmann notes, marks the transition to Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, a pivotal stage in Luke's Gospel.²⁷ Here a heavenly voice again speaks, as it had in the original baptism-anointing account, to affirm Jesus as God's Son and prepare him and his followers for the next phase of his ministry (9:34-35).²⁸

²⁵Each of these new beginnings contains echoes of the past in the choice and reconstitution of twelve (Josh 3:12; Luke 22:29-30; Acts 7:8), in the ritual appointment of elders to assist in carrying on the work (Num 11:16), and in the laying-on of hands (Num 8:10; 27:18-23).

²⁶This is in contrast to "all the people and the tax collectors," who, Luke says, had been baptized and who acknowledged God's justice. This passage, unique to Luke, is, in addition to the inclusion of the standard Synoptic pericope in which Jesus reinforces John's baptism by answering the question from the chief priests and elders regarding the source of his authority, pushes them to identify the source of John's authority (20:1-8).

²⁷Luke 9:28-36.

²⁸Indeed 2 Peter uses the term ἐπίτις (initiates) of the disciple-witnesses of the transfiguration (1:16-18), suggesting a possible early Christian interpretation of the event using the language of mystery-religion initiation.

Figure 1. Ritual and Divine Interaction in Luke 1–4

<i>Ritual</i>	<i>Lukan Passage</i>	<i>New Beginning</i>	<i>Divine Manifestation</i>	<i>Prayer</i>
Burning of incense at the Jerusalem Temple	1:5-22	Of “the things accomplished among us” (1:1)	“An angel of the Lord appeared” to Zacharias (1:11)	The “people are in prayer outside” (1:10); Zacharias’s “petition has been heard” (1:13)
Circumcision (and Naming)	1:57-79	Of John’s life	“Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied” 1:67	“Praised be the Lord God of Israel” (1:68)
Circumcision (and Naming), Purification, and Presentation	2:21-39	Of Jesus’ life	Simeon “came in the Spirit into the temple”	Simeon “praised God” (2:27); Anna “was serving with fastings and prayers night and day” (2:37)
Passover at the Jerusalem Temple	2:42-51	Of Jesus’ young manhood		(Jesus “must be in the house of [his] Father” 2:49)
John’s baptism	3:1-18	Of “a people prepared for the Lord” (1:17; 3:3–4)	“the word of God came upon John” (3:2)	
Jesus’ baptism-anointing	3:21–4:15	Of Jesus’ public ministry	“heaven opened, the Holy Spirit descended, . . . and a voice came out of heaven” (2:21–22)	This all takes place “while Jesus was praying”

Items in bold on the charts are not found in the other canonical Gospels

Figure 2. Rites of Commissioning in Luke-Acts

<i>Ritual Action</i>	<i>Passage</i>	<i>New Beginning</i>	<i>Prayer</i>	<i>Explicit Divine Intervention</i>
Anointing with the Spirit (Baptism, Wilderness Ordeals)	Luke 3:21-4:13	Of Jesus' public ministry	Prayer	Heaven opens; The Holy Spirit descends; A heavenly voice speaks
Formal naming to the role of apostle	Luke 6:12-16	Of the special role of the Twelve	Prayer	
Drawing of lots; Formal naming to role of apostle	Acts 1:15-26	Of Matthias's apostleship	Prayer	
Laying-on of hands; Formal naming to be in charge of the serving of food	Acts 6:1-6	Of Seven to serve food	Prayer	
(Fasting) Laying-on of hands; Formal naming to their mission	Acts 13:1-3	Of Paul and Barnabas for their divinely appointed mission	Prayer	Holy Spirit speaks
Fasting; Formal naming to eldership	Acts 14:23	Of elders in new churches	Prayer	
Last Will and Testament	Acts 20:17-38		Prayer	
<i>Items in bold are found only in Luke among the Gospels</i>				

Figure 3 Ritualization Linked in Luke-Acts to the Primary Ritual Paradigm of Baptism

<i>Event</i>	<i>Passage</i>	<i>New Beginning</i>	<i>Interaction with the Divine</i>	<i>Connection to Baptism</i>
John's baptism	3:1-21	Of a people prepared for the Lord (Of Jesus' ministry)	Jesus' prayer , the word of God came (the promise of a Holy Spirit baptism)	Foundational baptism story
Transfiguration	9:28-36	Of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem	Jesus' prayer, glory , voice, visit from Moses and Elijah	Voice from cloud echoes voice from heaven at baptism
Jesus' Passion in Jerusalem	12:50; 22:39-47	Of Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension	Jesus' prayer and the ministration of the angel opens the passion account in 22:39-43	Jesus speaks of his passion as a distressing baptism with which he must be baptized
Baptism of Believers	Acts 2:37-41; cf. 8:12-16, 36; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16	Of a people devoted to the Lord	An outpouring of the Holy Spirit is sometimes noted	Physical enactment of baptism/dipping; interpretation of its meaning in Luke-Acts overlaps with that of John's baptism
A Baptism with the Holy Spirit	Luke 3:16; Acts 2:1-4; (1:5,8,14) 11:15-17; (10:30, 31, 46)	Of the spread of the gospel by Jesus' witnesses	Prayer, sound from heaven, tongues as of fire, speaking with other tongues, exalting God	Direct verbal links to John's promise of a Holy Spirit baptism

Items in bold are found only in Luke among the Gospels

The Gospel's second indirect link to baptism in Luke 12:50 is likewise associated with the journey to Jerusalem. After a discourse calling his servants to care for others and prepare for their master's coming, Jesus remarks, "I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish that it was already kindled, but *I have a baptism to be baptized with* and how distressed I am until it is completed (τελεσθῆναι)." Again τελέω is used in association with ritual, though in this case clearly in a metaphorical sense.²⁹ As with Mark's similar query, "Are you able to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" (10:38), this statement utilizes the polyvalent character of ritual symbolism to speak figuratively of an experience Jesus was yet to undergo, most likely his suffering and death, the last stage of his ministry to which he was journeying in this section of Luke.³⁰ While experiences of suffering are often symbolized in the OT by overwhelming waters (e.g., 2 Sam 22:5; Ps 69:1-2), Jesus connects his experience to a use of water as a rite of passage, thereby implying also a new beginning on the other side of his passion experience. Thus baptism is used in Luke to interpret, and be itself interpreted by, each of the three main transitions referred to by Conzelmann: the baptism, the transfiguration, and the passion.

John's literal repentance-baptism comes again to the fore at the opening of the book of Acts, being not only repeatedly referenced as the beginning of Jesus' ministry (Acts 10:37; 13:23-25), but also identified as an essential qualification of the candidates for apostleship (1:21-22). As in Luke, repentance continues to be coupled with baptism, as attested by Peter's words, "Repent . . . and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins" (2:38; cf. 22:16). This ritual in Acts, however, gains additional layers of meaning, becoming above all a baptism "in the name of Jesus," entered into by those who believed the apostles' witness of him (e.g., 2:17-41; 8:12; 16:14-15, 30-33; 18:8).³¹ Thus Christian baptism comes to represent in Acts

²⁹Interestingly, the remaining three uses of τελέω in Luke-Acts are also in reference to the distressing events Jesus must "complete" in Jerusalem (Luke 18:31; 22:37; Acts 13:29). See also the use of the term τελειόω with a similar meaning in Luke 13:32 and Acts 20:24). Philo uses both τελέω and τελειόω to describe initiations into the mystery cults and also to metaphorically speak of the initiation of an individual to the "mysteries" of God (*Abr.* 1.122; *Mos.* 2.150; *Spec. Laws* 1.319, 323). These metaphorical uses of ritual terminology seem to assume that the intended audience would recognize such allusions and illustrates the diverse and flexible ways in which shared rite-of-passage experiences could be used in ancient literature (cf. Plutarch, *Fam.* 10.323).

³⁰Duncan M. Derrett, "Christ's Second Baptism (Luke 12:50; Mk 10:38-40)," *ExpTim* 100/8 (1989): 294-295. Possibly in the context of the symbol of fire in 12:49, the figurative reference to baptism is also meant to recall the baptism of fire promised by John (Luke 3:16).

³¹G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (London: Macmillan, 1962), 100; Joel B. Green, "From 'John's Baptism' to 'Baptism in the Name of the Lord Jesus': The Significance of Baptism in Luke-Acts," in *Baptism, the New Testament and the*

the pivotal act in a new believer's transition to allegiance to Christ, as well as a welcome into fellowship in the Christian community.³² The further baptism of the Holy Spirit, earlier promised by John (Luke 3:16), is recalled here in Jesus's prophecy of the initial coming of the Spirit upon his Jewish followers (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4), and in Peter's description of how the Spirit first fell upon the Gentiles in the household of Cornelius (11:16).³³ John's own baptism is, in Acts, considered incomplete (19:1-5; cf. 18:24-26).

*The Function of Rituals in the Narrative
Literature of Luke's Day*

Because authors of the day rarely gave attention to routine rites of passage, their occasional mention signals the likelihood that their inclusion functioned toward some purpose. Five purposes can be hypothesized for Luke's unusually concentrated attention to ritual: (1) the addition of drama and interest, drawing audiences into the work; (2) the recounting of an unusual occurrence at the time of the rite; (3) the foreshadowing of future greatness; (4) the grounding of new practice in proper ritual tradition; and (5) a pivotal transition point for the text as a whole. Such hypotheses can be constructed by a close reading of the Lukan text itself, but additionally it is valuable to consider the use of ritual in other narrative literature of the time in order to confirm those narrative functions of ritual that might have been familiar to the writer of Luke-Acts.

At times *the curious nature of the rite itself* can be seen to add drama and interest, drawing audiences into the work. This is evident in Lucius's initiation into the mystery religion of Isis in Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*, in which Apuleius tantalizes his audience with suspenseful hints and details regarding this most secret of rites (*Metam.* 11.22-24). Such also is the case in Plutarch's portrayal of the royal initiation of the Persian priests that Artaxerxes received upon his accession to kingship (*Art.* 3.1-4). In this rare *Greek* description of a "barbarian" rite, Artaxerxes enters the sanctuary of a warlike goddess, donning the robe of the great Cyrus the Elder, eating and drinking strange and symbolic substances, and engaging in other doings unknown to outsiders.

Luke-Acts, in contrast to *Metamorphoses* and *Artaxerxes*, gives little attention to the details of the rituals mentioned, which suggests that the purpose for their inclusion in this work goes beyond the factor of curiosity.

Church, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross, JSNTSup 171 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

³²Those who participated are spoken of as being "added" to the group of believers (2:41, 44). An interesting similarity in Greco-Roman ritual practice is the reenactment of a foundational story and the identification of the participant with the protagonist of the story in the initiation rituals into some mystery religions. See Collins, 55.

³³The actual arrival of the Holy Spirit is at times associated with the act of baptism in Acts, though never as its direct result (8:14-17; 9:17-18; 10:44-48; 19:5-6).

One additional aspect noted in the ritual account of Artaxerxes's initiation does, however, evidence a second similarity to the Lukan use of ritual. Here, as in Luke's account of Jesus' baptism and anointing, Plutarch takes the opportunity to speak not only of the initiation, but of *an unusual occurrence which took place at the time of the rite* when Artaxerxes's brother was accused of attempting to waylay and kill him. Such a recounting of unusual occurrences taking place in connection with a rite is a frequent function of ancient rite-of-passage accounts. At times these occurrences represent obstacles to be overcome (cf. Suetonius, *Cal.* 4.10), but at others they are positive occurrences that are manifestly supernatural in nature.

Portents foreshadowing the future destiny of an individual are a third function that is often depicted in the context of ritual. For example, Plutarch's Numa, before accepting the kingship of Rome, shows proper piety in insisting on the enactment of a traditional rite, which involved observing the flights of birds in order to obtain a portent of future success. Numa's search is rewarded when the auspicious species appears, approaching appropriately from the right (*Num.* 7.3–8.3). Suetonius, too, at the time of Galba's *toga virilis* rite, marking his transition from childhood to young manhood, portrays the future emperor dreaming that the goddess Fortuna was speaking to him, announcing "that she was tired of standing before his door, and that unless she were quickly admitted, she would fall a prey to the first comer" (*Galb.* 7.4–5; cf. also *Nero* 6.7–8).³⁴

As with these other narrative accounts, Luke-Acts portrays rites of passage, during which humans are seeking the blessing of the gods, as particularly appropriate for such heavenly manifestations. Charles Talbert has noted numerous portents in Luke 1–4, a number of which are set in the context of ritual, including Zacharias's incense-burning, during which an angel appears to announce John's birth; the infancy rites of both John and of Jesus, at which the Holy Spirit fills a bystander, who gives revelations about the child's future; the Passover, at which Jesus demonstrates his precocious understanding; and Jesus' anointing, in which the Holy Spirit and a voice of affirmation descend upon him from the open heavens.³⁵

While the highlighting of an unusual occurrence and the foreshadowing of future greatness further elucidate several of the ritual accounts in Luke 1–4, these do not fully explain the concentration of divinely attended rites in this section nor explain the later presence of rites with no association to such

³⁴For information on the *toga virilis* rite, see J. Albert Harrill, "Coming of Age and Putting on Christ: The *Toga Virilis* Ceremony, Its Paraenesis, and Paul's Interpretation of Baptism in Luke-Acts," *NovT* 44 (2002): 252–277.

³⁵Charles Talbert explores these Lukan portents ("Prophecies of Future Greatness: The Contribution of Greco-Roman Biographies to an Understanding of Luke 1:5–4:15," in *The Divine Helmsman*, ed. J. L. Crenshaw and S. Sandmel [New York: Ktav, 1980], 129–141).

portents. In this category, for example, is John's baptism of the people, during which no divine manifestations are reported to occur, as well as the ongoing patterns that echo from this baptism all the way to the end of Acts. These aspects of the Lukan use of ritual are more fully explained by a fourth function of ritual accounts, observable in the narrative literature. In these cases, ritual accounts can be seen to respond to the cultural reverence for tradition evident in both the Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures by *demonstrating that what was newly begun had its origins in properly enacted ritual tradition*.

Josephus, in his brief *Vita*, a work which leaves out significant periods of his life, notably takes the time to portray a ritualized transition from boyhood (ἀντίπαις) to public adult life (πολιτεύομαι). In this passage, he appeals to traditions his audience knew and even expected in association with such a life transition in order to provide appropriate foundations for his depiction of himself as a heroic Jewish general and a worthy representative of the ancient heritage of Judaism (*Vita* 10–12).³⁶ Thus Josephus claims that at the age of 16—the traditional time of transition to adulthood in Greco-Roman culture—he devoted himself to rigorous training under the three main Jewish sects, just as young men on the verge of adulthood in Greco-Roman narrative literature often became disciples themselves to the various philosophical schools. Still unsatisfied, Josephus says, he apprenticed himself to a hermit in the wilderness, immersing himself in an isolated environment reminiscent of that of Moses before his deliverance of Israel, and noting also the similarity of his training to the young men of classical Athens and Sparta during their military initiation to adulthood.³⁷ Philo, referencing a different ritual transition, augments, for his Greco-Roman audience, the impressiveness of Moses' transition to leadership by describing it in terms of the well-known and respected initiation into the secrets and priesthood of a mystery cult (*Gig.* 53–54).

Plutarch, too, in his *Parallel Lives*, pauses to demonstrate that Theseus's pious travels to Delphi to offer some of his hair to the god was a practice that remained in his day as a custom for youth who were coming of age (*Theb.* 5.1). Immediately following this rite, Theseus successfully undergoes various ordeals, journeying through wilderness areas on his way to Athens, conquering the wicked creatures that lived there. (Such a facing of ordeals is an aspect common in certain rites of passage and can be seen in Luke's

³⁶A convincing discussion of Josephus's purposes in the *Vita* can be found in *Life*, vol. 9, *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary*, ed. Steve N. Mason (Leiden: Brill, 2001), xlvii–l; cf. Per Bilde, *Flavius Josephus between Jerusalem and Rome: His Life, His Works and Their Importance* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1988), 110–113; and Jerome H. Neyrey, "Josephus' *Vita* and the *Encomium*: A Native Model of Personality," *JSJ* 25/2 (1994): 177–206. Steve Mason also discusses this passage as a transition to public life ("Was Josephus a Pharisee: A Re-Examination of *Life* 10–12," *JJS* 40 (1989): 40.

³⁷Exod 2:15; 3:1; cf. Philo, *Ant.* 2.255–256, 264–278.

depiction of Jesus' overcoming of the wilderness temptations following his baptism.)

For Luke, the addition of the infancy narrative to Mark's portrayal of the baptism at the beginning of the Gospel leads the audience, as in the examples above, to understand that the lives of John and of Jesus grew out of a devoted observance of ritual—of incense, infancy, and Passover—stipulated by God himself, as recorded in the Law. These unimpeachable foundations for ministry are further confirmed by the divine visitations at the time of their ritual enactments.³⁸

John's baptism in Luke 3 does not fit as obviously into this pattern, for it was not performed along the lines of any single anciently prescribed ritual, although baptism did have strong traditional ritual connections, as noted above.³⁹ Most important in Luke-Acts, however, is that John's baptism, with its roots in older ritual practices and its initiation and visitation by God, is portrayed as the traditional practice, repeatedly recalled, which itself gives authority to the Christian baptism central to the narrative of Acts.

Finally, both direct references and metaphorical links to John's baptism in Luke-Acts highlight its importance as *a pivotal point in the Lukan text as a whole*. Although rites of passage by their very nature stand at the transition between one stage and the next in the lives of an individual or group, in Luke and certain narrative literature of his time they also function as significant turning points for the narrative as a whole. This is evident, for example, in the events surrounding the mystery initiation of Lucius in the *Metamorphoses*, beginning with his transformation from donkey back to man, during which his ill-fated wanderings are replaced with a blessed life of devotion to Isis. Luke-Acts similarly presents John's baptism as a pivotal transition not in the narrative of a single individual, but in the summing up of history as a whole. This can be seen not only in Jesus' statement that "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached" (Luke 16:16), but also in Peter's statement to Cornelius in Acts 10:37: "You know what has happened throughout all Judea, *beginning* in Galilee after the baptism of John" (cf. Luke 7:18-35; 20:1-8).⁴⁰

³⁸This powerful ritual grounding stands together with the piety of the two families, so important in the ancient evaluation of character, which has been already noted by Luke in the description of the blameless Zacharias and Elizabeth (1:6). See, e.g., Fitzmyer, 316.

³⁹Indeed Luke's use of the term βαπτίζω in Luke 11:38, with regard to the Pharisee's insistence on the ritual cleansing of hands (the LXX uses the verb βάπτω) may recall these ancient Jewish practices.

⁴⁰While Conzelmann, 22, 57, 146-149, overemphasized an exact moment for his theorized transition from a period of Israel and the prophets to a new era in salvation history, which he called the period of Jesus, this does not negate the pivotal place given to John and his baptism in the reconstruction of history portrayed in Luke-Acts.

Conclusion

With the institution of John's baptism and the associated anointing of Jesus, reports of traditionally grounded ritual, so central to Luke 1–4, largely cease. Ritual connections continue to be important, however, above all, in the reinforcing and enriching of the newly woven tradition of baptism, for which John's divinely initiated and traditionally rooted baptism forms a foundation and pivotal point.

It is evident that Luke-Acts gives unusual attention to rites of passage in comparison with the other canonical Gospels and other narrative literature of the day. By considering uses of ritual accounts in the narrative literature of the day, five functions have been discovered that help to explain the various ritual uses in Luke-Acts: (1) the addition of drama and interest drawing audiences into the work, (2) the recounting of an unusual occurrence at the time of the rite, (3) the foreshadowing of future greatness, (4) the grounding of new practice in proper ritual tradition, and (5) a pivotal transition point for the text as a whole.

There is much rich work yet to be done in the study of ritual in Luke-Acts, including further exploration of the meanings and associations evoked for ancient audiences by the various aspects of these ritual accounts. What is provided here is the recognition that the prevalence of rites of passage in Luke-Acts is not just happenstance, but that, above all, through ritual, Luke-Acts demonstrates, that the pivotal events of this new era both for the church of Christ and for individual believers are properly begun and grounded in tradition. In the case of baptism and Jesus' anointing, these traditions have been further demonstrated to be rewoven to their new and particular purposes by the ritualizing activity of God himself.

“THE LORD’S DAY” OF REVELATION 1:10 IN THE CURRENT DEBATE

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John the Revelator begins the main body of his ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ by stating that he was on the island of Patmos in tribulation because of his faithful testimony to the gospel. He states further that, while there, he came to be ἐν πνεύματι ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ (Rev 1:10), at which time he encountered the resurrected Christ. The phrase ἐν πνεύματι unequivocally refers to the first visionary experience the Revelator had on Patmos (cf. 4:2; 17:3; 21:10). He was about to be shown a representation of events and forces affecting God’s people, which were already at work in his own time and would lead into the time of the end.

The phrase ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ has been widely debated among expositors of the Apocalypse in the last fifty years—particularly during the 1960s, when there were a number of exchanges of opinions in scholarly journals.¹ The difficulty with this enigmatic expression is twofold. First, it is a *hapax legomenon*: the exact phrase in Greek occurs nowhere else in the NT, the LXX, or in early Christian writings (coinciding with the time of the writing of Revelation). Second, the context does not give any indication, or even a hint, regarding which day of the week the text is referring to. In addition, Christian sources contemporaneous with Revelation are not particularly helpful.

Furthermore, there is no occurrence of the adjective κυριακός in the LXX.² Formerly, the word was considered as Christian in origin; however, it has been attested in Greek papyri and inscriptions preceding Christianity.³

¹C. W. Dugmore, “The Lord’s Day and Easter,” *Neotestamentica et Patristica in honorem sexagenarii O. Cullmann, Supplements to Novum Testamentum* 6 (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 272-281; Fritz Guy, “‘The Lord’s Day’ in the Letter of Ignatius to the Magnesians,” *AUSS* 2 (1964): 1-17; Lawrence T. Geraty, “The Pascha and the Origin of Sunday Observance,” *AUSS* 3 (1965): 85-96; Wilfrid Stott, “A Note on the Word *kyriakē* in Rev. 1.10,” *NTS* 12 (1965): 70-75. For a response to Stott, see Kenneth A. Strand, “Another Look at ‘Lord’s Day’ in the Early Church and in Rev. 1.10,” *NTS* 13 (1966): 174-181; see also Paul K. Jewett, *The Lord’s Day* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 57-67; R. J. Bauckham, “The Lord’s Day,” in *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 221-250.

²The adjective κυριακός occurs in the LXX only in 2 Macc 15:36 in association with the word φωνή. However, there is a variant reading Συριακῆ, noted by Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath (*A Concordance to the Septuagint and Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament*, 3 vols. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987], 2:800).

³Adolf Deissmann shows that the word was common in Egypt and Asia Minor, where it meant “imperial.” Almost all known usages are in connection with imperial

Although there are some rare examples of secular usage of the word in Greco-Roman sources, κυριακός was almost exclusively used with reference to imperial administration. Thus it is not difficult to see how the word was adopted by early Christians to mean “belonging to the Lord” Jesus Christ as a part of a resistance against emperor worship. In the NT, it is used by Paul in 1 Cor 11:20 as an adjective in “the Lord’s supper” (κυριακὸν δεῖπνον). However, in the late second century the word was used by the Patristic authors only with qualifying nouns that exclusively referred to Christ: e.g., λόγος, λόγια, γραφαί, ὄπλα, αἵμα, σῶμα, δεῖπνον, φωνή, ἐντολαί, and παρουσία.⁴ In the same manner, in Revelation κυριακός is an adjective (“the Lord’s”), clearly qualifying ἡμέρα as “the Lord’s day.”

In the contemporary debate, there are two major approaches used to interpret the expression κυριακὴ ἡμέρα. Most commentators, ancient and modern, believe it refers to a literal weekly day. This approach, which boasts a consensus among most scholars, interprets the expression as referring to Sunday, the first day of the week. Several alternative proposals have been suggested. They range from Easter Sunday and Emperor’s Day to the seventh-day Sabbath, the latter held generally by Seventh-day Adventists. In the second approach, scholars maintain that κυριακὴ ἡμέρα refers figuratively to the eschatological “day of the Lord.”

The purpose of this article is to review and evaluate these major proposals and to suggest a plausible meaning of the enigmatic expression κυριακὴ ἡμέρα in the Apocalypse.

Κυριακὴ ἡμέρα as Sunday

The prevailing view among ancient and modern commentators is that κυριακὴ ἡμέρα refers to Sunday, the first day of the week.⁵ The main argument presented

finance, where κυριακός qualifies nouns such as “[Lord’s] treasury” and “[Lord’s] service” (*Light from the Ancient East*, 2d ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965], 357-358); also idem, *Bible Studies* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1903), 217-218; see also W. H. P. Hatch, “Some Illustrations of New Testament Usage from Greek Inscriptions of Asia Minor,” *JBL* 27 (1908): 138.

⁴Cf. Deissman, *Bible Studies*, 222-224; Stott, 71.

⁵E.g., Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament*, 3d ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958), 4:554-555; Henry B. Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), 13; Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 357; Robert H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1920), 22-23; Stott, 70-75; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 2d ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 55-56; George E. Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 31; Bauckham, 221-250; Leon Morris, *The Book of Revelation*, 2d ed., TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 52; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Revelation: Vision of a Just World*, Proclamation Commentaries (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 50; Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7: An Exegetical Commentary*

in support of this view is that from the second century Christian writers used this term with reference to Sunday because Jesus was resurrected on this day. It is undeniable that later in history Sunday became known as “the Lord’s day.” Κυριακή ἡμέρα and the short form κυριακή became the designation for Sunday among Greek-speaking authors, while *diēs Dominica*, derived from the Vulgate text, became the name for Sunday in ecclesiastical Latin.⁶ However, all the references to Sunday as “the Lord’s day” were used nearly one century after Revelation was written. As such, they cannot be regarded as evidence for determining the meaning of κυριακή ἡμέρα as Sunday at the time of the writing of Revelation.

However, two early second-century Christian writings, *Didache* and the letter of Ignatius of Antioch to the Magnesians, are commonly regarded as the strongest evidences for an early usage of κυριακή ἡμέρα with reference to Sunday.⁷ It is necessary, therefore, to take a closer look at the two texts to find the meaning behind the adjectival term used in them.

Didache (known as *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*) is an early instructional manual, dated from the late first century to the late second century. Most scholars today are in favor of the earlier date. The statement of interest is found in *Codex Hierosolymitanus* (Codex C, or “H” in some editions), the only surviving complete Greek manuscript of the document, which reads as follows:

Didache: Κατὰ κυριακὴν δὲ κυρίου συναχθέντες κλάσατε ἄρτον καὶ εὐχαριστήσατε, . . .

Lightfoot’s translation: “On the Lord’s own day gather together and break bread and give thanks, [having first confessed your sins so that your sacrifice may be pure.]”⁸

(Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), 90-92; David E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, WBC 52a (Waco: Word, 1997), 83-84; Gregory K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 203; Christopher C. Rowland, “The Book of Revelation,” in *NIB* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 12:566; Stephen S. Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005), 51; Brian K. Blount, *Revelation: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 43.

⁶Walter F. Specht, “Sunday in the New Testament,” in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, ed. Kenneth A. Strand (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982), 126.

⁷Bauckham, 223, lists thirteen second-century references in which κυριακή ἡμέρα or κυριακή allegedly mean “the Lord’s day.” It is important to note that only two of these references, the *Didache* and Ignatius’s *To the Magnesians*, are from the early second century, and all others come from the late second century.

⁸*Did.* 14.1, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Text and English Translations of Their Writings*, trans. J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, 3d ed., ed. Michael W. Holmes (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 364-365 (unless otherwise noted, all further reference to the Apostolic Fathers will come from this edition). Cf. also Bart D. Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers: English*

It should be noted here that the text reads κατὰ κυριακὴν δὲ κυρίου. The substantive “day” (ἡμέραν in the accusative case) does not appear in the text, but rather is supplied by the translators and is rendered, “on the Lord’s day.” However, there is no textual evidence that would warrant such a reading of the text, which is an obvious stretch. Nor does the context indicate that the Lord’s day is intended. Strong evidence suggests, however, that the phrase could rather mean κατὰ κυριακὴν διδασχὴν,⁹ κατὰ κυριακὴν ἐντολήν, or κατὰ κυριακὴν ὄδον (“according to the Lord’s teaching, . . . command, or . . . way”).

The next alleged evidence is the letter *To the Magnesians*, attributed to Ignatius of Antioch, who died between 98 and 117.¹⁰ The letter deals with, among other things, the issue of “Judaizing,” a series of Jewish practices that continuously caused disputes in Christian communities. The author admonishes the Magnesians: “If we continue to live in accordance with Judaism, we admit that we have not received grace.”¹¹ It is in this context that Ignatius gives the following warning:

Ignatius: Εἰ οὖν οἱ ἐν παλαιοῖς πράγμασιν ἀναστραφέντες εἰς καινότητα ἐλπίδος ἦλθον, μηκέτι σαββατίζοντες ἀλλὰ κατὰ κυριακὴν ζῶντες, ἐν ᾗ καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἡμῶν ἀνέτειλεν δι’ αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, ὃν τινες ἀρνοῦνται, δι’ οὗ μυστηρίου ἐλάβομεν τὸ πιστεῦειν, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὑπομένομεν, ἵνα εὐρεθῶμεν μαθηταὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ μόνου διδασκάλου ἡμῶν.

Lightfoot’s translation: “If, then, those who had lived in antiquated practices came to newness of hope, no longer keeping the Sabbath but living in accordance with the Lord’s day, on which our life also arose through him and his death [which some deny], the mystery through which we came to believe, and because of which we patiently endure, in order that we might be found to be disciples of Jesus Christ, our teacher.”¹²

The common understanding of the phrase μηκέτι σαββατίζοντες ἀλλὰ κατὰ κυριακὴν is that Ignatius bade the Magnesians to give up the Sabbath

and Greek, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 1:438.

⁹See Samuele Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity* (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977), 114, n. 73; Kenneth A. Strand, “The ‘Lord’s Day’ in the Second Century,” in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, ed. Kenneth A. Strand (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982), 346, 351, n. 16. On the other hand, Bauckham, 227-228, has doubts concerning the addition of διδασχὴν, since he believes that the *Apostolic Constitutions* 7.30.1 (fourth century), which interpreted the *Didache*, has ἡμέρα with κυριακῆ.

¹⁰*Ign. Magn.* (*Apostolic Fathers*, 202-213). Our knowledge of the circumstance within which Ignatius’s letters were written is drawn from the letter itself, as well as from Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 3.36; *NPNF*², 1:166-169).

¹¹*Ign. Magn.* 8.1 (*Apostolic Fathers*, 207-209): εἰ γὰρ μέχρι νῦν κατὰ ἰουδαϊσμον ζῶμεν, ὁμολογοῦμεν χάριν μὴ εἰληφέναι (see also 10.3; *Ign. Phld.* 6.1).

¹²*Ign. Magn.* 9.1 (*Apostolic Fathers*, 208-209).

and observe the Lord’s day, which was presumably Sunday.¹³ However, as in the case of the *Didache*, the Greek text does not read κυριακῆν ἡμέραν, but rather κατὰ κυριακῆν (“according to the Lord’s”) without the substantive ἡμέραν. In this case as well, the word “day” is supplied by the translators, making the phrase read: “On the Lord’s day.”

The statement under consideration comes from the commonly accepted Greek edition of the middle recension of the Ignatian letters.¹⁴ The only surviving Greek manuscript of the middle recension, Codex G (*Codex Medicus Laurentius*), considered to be the parent of other Greek manuscripts in existence today as well as the Latin translations,¹⁵ actually reads κατὰ κυριακῆν ζώην (“according with the Lord’s life”). However, the Greek text, reconstructed by modern editors and which serves as the basis for English translations, omits the substantive ζώην after κατὰ κυριακῆν. Such a reading bears an obvious impact on the common understanding of the meaning of κατὰ κυριακῆν. Since the two expressions σαββατίζω and κυριακῆν do not occur elsewhere in the Ignatian letters, the readers are left to choose which of the two words, ζώην (supported by the best manuscripts) or ἡμέραν (as a conjecture), fits the context.¹⁶

On the basis of a careful analysis of the usage of κυριακός in early Christian writings, Richard Bauckham notes a variety of meanings for the word, which “must be determined from the sense and context in any particular case.”¹⁷ Several careful studies have shown that, in this case, the manuscript and contextual evidence are both on the side of the substantive ζώην.¹⁸ After having carefully compared and critically examined the Ignatian

¹³Guy, 10, mentions the theological bias of the translator in weighting the validity of the ancient manuscripts. R. B. Lewis demonstrates how the passage has been translated differently, with scholars expressing obvious theological bias. For example: Robert and Donaldson, the editors of *ANF*: “no longer observing sabbaths but fashioning their lives after the Lord’s Day”; Lake: “no longer living for the Sabbath, but for the Lord’s day”; Kleist: “no longer observe the Sabbath, but regulate their calendar by the Lord’s Day”; Goodspeed: “no longer keeping the Sabbath but observing the Lord’s Day”; Richardson: “They ceased to keep the Sabbath and lived by the Lord’s day”; Grant: “no longer keeping the Sabbath [cf. Isa 1:13] but living in accordance with the Lord’s [day, cf. Rev 1:10] (“Ignatius and the Lord’s Day,” *AUSS* 6 [1968]: 55-56, brackets original).

¹⁴There are three basic forms of the letters, referred to as the short, middle, and long recensions. The multiplicity of forms created debates over the authenticity of the letters. Today, the seven letters of the middle recension are generally considered to be authentic (Holmes, 171-173; see Virginia Corwin, *St. Ignatius and Christianity in Antioch* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960]; Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* [Utrecht: Spectrum, 1950], 1:74; also Ehrman, 1:209-213).

¹⁵See Quasten, 1:74; Holmes, 185; Guy, 17.

¹⁶Lewis, 51-52.

¹⁷Bauckham, 224.

¹⁸See Guy, 7-17; cf. Lewis, 48-53.

manuscripts available today, Fritz Guy concludes that the evidence favors the longer reading *κατὰ κυριακῆν ζώην*, that the evidence for *κατὰ κυριακὴν* instead of *κατὰ κυριακῆν ζώην* is very weak, and that the latter is most likely the original.¹⁹ A similar conclusion has been reached by other scholars.²⁰

The contextual evidence seems to be in favor of *ζώην* rather than *ἡμέραν*.²¹ The statements that precede and follow the passage in question help to clarify further the meaning of the enigmatic Ignatian statement:

Magn. 8.1-2 For if we continue to live in accordance with Judaism (*κατὰ Ἰουδαϊσμόν ζῶμεν*), we admit that we have not received grace. For *the most godly prophets* lived in accordance with Jesus Christ. This is why they were persecuted.²²

Magn. 9.1-2 If, then, those who had lived in ancient practices came to newness of hope, no longer sabbatizing but living in accordance with the Lord's [life] (*κατὰ κυριακῆν ζῶντες*), in which our life also arose through him and his death. . . . how shall we be able to live without him, of whom also *the prophets*, who were his disciples in the Spirit, were looking for as their teacher?²³

Magn. 10.1 Therefore, having become his disciples, let us learn to live in accordance with Christianity (*κατὰ Χριστιανισμόν ζῆν*).²⁴

¹⁹Guy, 2-17; see also Lewis, 46-59. On the basis of the evidence, Lewis, 58, concludes that the expression “the Lord’s day” is theologically biased and artificially forced into the text for the purpose of supporting an early use of the term for Sunday.

²⁰Lewis, 56-58, quotes three nineteenth-century Sunday advocates, who saw serious weakness in the Lord’s day as Sunday arguments in Ignatius’s letter. E.g., B. Powell, who declared that the passage from Ignatius “is confessedly obscure, and the text may be corrupt,” noted that “On this view the passage does not refer at all to the Lord’s day; but even on the opposite supposition it cannot be regarded as affording any positive evidence to the early use of the term ‘Lord’s day’ (for which it is often cited), since the material word *ἡμέρα* is purely conjectural” (“Lord’s Day,” in *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature*, ed. John Kitto [New York: Mark H. Newman, 1835], 2:270).

²¹I am indebted for this idea to Guy, 13-14, and R. A. Kraft, “Sabbath in Early Christianity,” *AUSS* 3 (1965): 28-29. Cf. Strand, “Another Look at ‘Lord’s Day,’” 179.

²²Lightfoot’s translation of 8.1-2: εἰ γὰρ μέχρι νῦν κατὰ Ἰουδαϊσμόν ζῶμεν, ὁμολογοῦμεν χάριν μὴ εἰληφέναι. οἱ γὰρ θειοτατοὶ προφῆται κατὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἔζησαν. διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἐδιώχθησαν.

²³My translation of 9.1-2: Εἰ οὖν οἱ ἐν παλαιοῖς πράγμασιν ἀναστραφέντες εἰς καινότητα ἐλπίδος ἦλθον, μηκέτι σαββατίζοντες ἀλλὰ κατὰ κυριακῆν ζῶντες, ἐν ἧ καὶ ἡ ζώη ἡμῶν ἀντεῖλεν δι’ αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, . . . πῶς ἡμεῖς δουησόμεθα ζῆσαι χωρὶς αὐτοῦ, οὐ καὶ οἱ προφῆται μαθηταὶ ὄντες τῷ πνεύματι, ὡς διδάσκαλον αὐτὸν προσεδόκων;

²⁴Lightfoot’s translation of 10.1: διὰ τοῦτο, μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ γενόμενοι, μάθωμεν κατὰ Χριστιανισμόν ζῆν.

This closer look at the text shows that Ignatius contrasts “two different ways of living—one apart from ‘grace’ [‘judaizing’], the other in the power of the resurrection life.”²⁵ The “according to” (κατά) construction used in these three comparative passages contrasts living “in accordance with Judaism” with living “in accordance with Jesus Christ” (8.2) and/or living “in accordance with Christianity” (10.1). This suggests that the text that comes between (9.1) should read as “living in accordance with the Lord’s life.” Thus “Sabbatizing” most likely does not mean Sabbath observance, but rather the keeping of the Sabbath in accordance with Judaism.²⁶

Furthermore, the persons whom Ignatius is referring to in 9.1—those “who had lived in ancient practices . . . no longer sabbatizing but living in accordance with the Lord’s [life]”—are actually the ancient Hebrew prophets (clearly stated in 8.2 and 9.2).

As Robert A. Kraft correctly points out, Ignatius “warns the Magnesians in Asia Minor not to live ‘in accord with Judaism’ but to follow the insight which even the divine prophets of old had received through God’s grace and to live ‘in accord with Christ Jesus,’ God’s Son and God’s Logos sent to man.”²⁷

In referring to “the most godly prophets” who “lived in accordance with Jesus Christ,” Ignatius most likely had in mind the passages from the prophets, such as Isa 1:13-17, which indicted the people’s outwardly ritualistic observance of the Sabbath, much as Jesus did with reference to the Pharisaic observance of the Sabbath according to the Synoptics (cf. Matt 12:1-13; Mark 2:23–3:5; Luke 6:1-11). Ignatius might have also been thinking of Isa 56:1-8 and 58:13-14, which urged the people to observe the Sabbath.²⁸ This is probably the best way to understand how the ancient prophets “lived in accordance with Jesus Christ.” Such an assertion is fully supported by Kraft’s reading of the Ignatian passage, which, in Kraft’s view, is most likely the original second-century reading:

If, then, those who walked in the ancient customs [i.e., the aforementioned prophets] came to have a new hope, no longer ‘sabbatizing’ but living in accord with the Lord’s life—in which life there sprang up also our life through him and through his death— . . . how shall we be able to live apart from him, of whom the prophets also were disciples, since they had received him as teacher in the spirit? Wherefore, he whom they justly awaited when he arrived, raised them from the dead. . . . Thus, we should be his disciples—we should learn to live in accord with Christianity. . . . It

²⁵Kraft, 28.

²⁶Lewis, 50-51; so also Bauckham, 229; contrary to Willy Rordorf, *Sunday: The History of the Day of Rest and Worship in the Earliest Centuries of the Christian Church* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1968), 210-211.

²⁷Kraft, 27; see also Guy, 1.

²⁸If Ignatius indeed had Isaiah in mind, he would have accepted the unity of the book, and thereby would have ascribed Isaiah 56 and 58 to the author of Isaiah 1.

is absurd to proclaim Jesus Christ and to 'Judaize'. For Christianity has not placed its trust in Judaism, but vice-versa.²⁹

After taking a closer look at the evidence, one might conclude that Ignatius does not appear to urge the Magnesians to refrain from observing the Sabbath and to live according to the Lord's day, presumably Sunday, but rather to live "according with the Lord's life."³⁰ At this point, Richard B. Lewis correctly observes that

it is almost certain, if we are to avoid absurdity in our treatment of Magnesians, that *sabbatizing* is equivalent to the idea of Judaizing, a practice which could be avoided even while keeping the Sabbath. This is the only feasible explanation inasmuch as it is the Sabbath-keeping Old Testament prophets who are described as 'no longer sabbatizing'. To interpret the next words of the same passage in such a way as to make the Old Testament prophets keep Sunday is, of course, equally absurd.³¹

The context thus shows that the text under consideration does not suggest a Sabbath/Sunday controversy.³² The burden of Ignatius's argument was not to discuss days of worship, but to encourage an observance of the Sabbath in a spiritual manner. Such a notion fits the historical context; Kenneth Strand correctly observes that, at least during the earlier period of Christianity,

The anti-Judaizing or anti-Sabbatizing emphasis may not have been involved with the matter of days at all, but rather with a manner of worship or way of life; namely, Christian liberty versus Jewish legalism. When this sort of polemic was first clearly applied to days (again in the early period), it was used in an effort to encourage a Sabbath observance of spiritual, rather than merely formal and legalistic, quality.³³

²⁹Translation from Kraft, 27, brackets and ellipses original.

³⁰Regarding the possibility of a cognate accusative (in which a noun in the accusative is coupled with a participle of the same etymological family, producing an idiom that often has no literal parallel in English), according to which *κατὰ κυριακὴν ζῶντες* could be translated as "living a life according to the Lord's day," Guy, 10-11 and 16, concludes that "living according to the Lord's life" is warranted by the context of the passage, the literary style, and the theological emphasis of Ignatius over the former. See also Bauckham, 228-229.

³¹Lewis, 51.

³²Contra Rordorf, 211.

³³Kenneth A. Strand, "Some Notes on the Sabbath Fast in Early Christianity," *AUSS* 3 (1965): 172. Bauckham, 229, admits that it was not Ignatius's intent to draw any real contrast between days as such, but between ways of life (e.g., between "sabbatizing," living according to Jewish legalism, and living according to the resurrection). However, he believes that the Sabbath is implied in the text as a distinguishing characteristic of Judaism.

Such an idea is expressed in the expanded version of chapter 9 of *To the Magnesians*, which is interpolated by an unknown fourth-century editor:

Let us, therefore no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner, and rejoice in days of idleness. . . . But let every one of you keep the Sabbath after a spiritual manner, rejoicing in meditation on the law, not in relaxation of the body, admiring the workmanship of God, and not eating things prepared the day before, nor using lukewarm drinks, and walking within a prescribed space, nor finding delight in dancing and plaudits which have no sense in them [*reference to well-known Jewish practices with respect to Sabbath*]. And after the observance of the Sabbath, let every friend of Christ keep the Lord’s Day as a festival, the resurrection-day, the queen and chief of all days [of the week].³⁴

If there is any conclusion, however, to be drawn from Ignatius’s reference to “sabbatizing” (σαββατίζοντες), it is that the Christians at that time were still observing the Sabbath.

On the basis of the foregoing discussion, one might conclude that there is no conclusive evidence showing that κυριακή ἡμέρα was used for the first day of the week by Christians in the early second century³⁵ or that would lead us to the conclusion that the Revelator initiated the expression in question to mean Sunday. Walter F. Specht correctly observes that the Fourth Gospel, dated later than Revelation, refers to Sunday as “the first day of the week,” something that would seem very unusual if it was already known as “the Lord’s day.”³⁶ In addition, the early anti-Jewish polemical works, including those of Barnabas (c. 100) and Justin Martyr (c. 110-165), do not use the term “Lord’s day” with reference to Sunday, but rather use “the first day of the week,” “the eighth day,” or “Sunday” instead as common second-century Christian designations for Sunday.³⁷

All of the evidence for the alleged understanding of κυριακή ἡμέρα or the short version κυριακή from the early Christian era as “Sunday” actually

³⁴Pseudo-Ignatius, *Magnesians* 9.3-4 (ANF 1:62-63; first set of brackets supplied; second set of brackets original).

³⁵Joseph Seiss stresses that “none of the Christian writings for 100 years after Christ ever call it [Sunday] ‘the Lord’s day’” (*The Apocalypse* [New York: Charles C. Cook, 1906], 1:20).

³⁶Specht, 120, 1.

³⁷*Barn.* 15.8-9 (ANF 1:146-147); Justin, *Dial.* 24, 41, 138 (ANF 1:206, 215, 268); idem, *1 Apol.* 67 (ANF 1:185-186). Here Justin refers to Sunday as τῆ τοῦ ἡλίου λεγομένη ἡμέρα, and the day after Saturday ἥτις ἐστὶν ἡλίου ἡμέρα. Strand points to the Latin version of the second-century NT apocryphal *Acts John*, which makes a statement regarding John: “And on the seventh day, it being the Lord’s day, he said to them: Now it is time for me also to partake of food” (ANF 8:561). It is particularly interesting that the text does call the seventh day, rather than Sunday, as the Lord’s day” (Strand, “Sabbath Fast,” 180).

comes from the late second century.³⁸ The first conclusive evidence of its usage in reference to Sunday comes from the latter part of the second century in the apocryphal work *The Gospel of Peter*.³⁹ The first church father who used it in the same way was Clement of Alexandria (ca. 190).⁴⁰ It could be that at some later time these authors eventually took the familiar phrase, derived from Revelation, and applied it to Sunday as the first day of the week. However, the later usage of the expression κυριακή ἡμέρα might not be admissible as evidence to support the use of this meaning in the first century.

The whole question of the rise of Sunday and the eclipse of Sabbath observance in the second century is “a complex one”⁴¹ and “remains shrouded in mystery.”⁴² What all historical sources indicate, however, is that until the fourth and fifth centuries the two days were both observed side-by-side by the Eastern segment of Christianity, although already at an early period Sunday observance was urged as the day of rest instead of Sabbath, due mainly to anti-Jewish sentiments.⁴³ The change from one day to another was slow and gradual. It was not until the fourth century—due to several factors, including theological, ecclesiological, and political—that Sunday observance finally took the place of Sabbath observance.⁴⁴ What seems very likely is, as

³⁸Contra Bauckham, 225, who argues that κυριακή ἡμέρα had been established early as the common Christian name for Sunday for the purpose of distinguishing it from ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου. Bauckham supports his claim with historical evidence. A. Strobel acknowledges that κυριακή as a term applied to Sunday represents, as it is generally acknowledged, a secondary development (“Die Passa-Erwartung als urchristliches Problem in Lc 17.20f,” ZNW 49 [1958]: 185, n. 104).

³⁹*Gos. Pet.* 9.50: “Early in the morning of the Lord’s day [ἄρθρου δὲ τῆς κυριακῆς], Mary Magdalene, a disciple of the Lord . . . came to the sepulcher” (*New Testament Apocrypha*, 2d ed., ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991], 1:224). There is a similarity here to two other apocryphal writings from the same period: *Acts Pet.* 29-30, identifies *dies dominica* with “the day after the Sabbath” (Schneemelcher, 2:311), and *Acts Paul* 7.3 speaks of the apostle as praying “on the sabbath as [κυριακῆ] drew near” (Schneemelcher, 2:252).

⁴⁰Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 14 (ANF 2:459).

⁴¹Strand, “Sabbath Fast,” 173.

⁴²Sigve K. Tonstad, *The Lost Meaning of the Sabbath* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2009), 301; Rordorf, 301, candidly admits that “Nowhere do we find any evidence which would unambiguously establish where, when, and why the Christian observance of Sunday arose.”

⁴³Strand, “Sabbath Fast,” 173. Dugmore, 279, argues that it is a historical fact that the observance of the Sabbath as a day of Christian worship did not disappear until the late fourth or early fifth century.

⁴⁴The official acceptance of Sunday observance in place of Sabbath, which came in the fourth to fifth centuries, was due to two major factors: (1) Constantine’s law of 321, which requested the urban population to rest on “the venerable day of the

J. Massyngberde Ford candidly admits in her comment on Rev 1:10, that at the time that Revelation was written “most probably the Christian would still be keeping the Sabbath, the seventh day.”⁴⁵ Questions concerning the change from Sabbath to Sunday are, however, beyond the scope of this study.

Κυριακή ἡμέρα *as Easter Sunday*

Another interpretation is that κυριακή ἡμέρα refers to the Christian Passover or Easter Sunday, as an annual event, rather than the weekly Sunday.⁴⁶ It is argued further that it was on the day of the annual celebration of the resurrection that John was carried in the Spirit to meet the resurrected Christ. As a representative view, C. W. Dugmore suggests that the sources indicate that the earliest Christian references to the Lord’s day are to Easter as an annual commemoration of the resurrection and that its use for “the first day of every week would only have been possible after Sunday had become a regular day of worship among Christians.”⁴⁷ In this way, both the observance of Sunday and its alleged title κυριακή somehow developed from Easter Sunday.⁴⁸ Some have found support for such a possibility in the early church’s tradition, reported by Jerome in his commentary on Matthew 25, that Christ would return at midnight on Easter.⁴⁹ Jerome stated that “the apostolic

Sun,” while allowing farmers to pursue their agriculture work regardless of the day of the week (see *Codex Justinianus* 3.12.3, trans. H. S. Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*, 2d ed. [New York: Oxford University Press, 1970], 26). (2) The various Church Councils, which formally renounced the Sabbath on behalf of Sunday, include Elvira (A.D. 306), Nicea (A.D. 325), and Laodicea (A.D. 363). The latter urged Christians not to rest on Sabbath, but instead to honor Sunday as the Lord’s day and pronounced anathema on and called Judaizers all who kept observing the Sabbath.

⁴⁵J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation*, AB 38 (New York: Doubleday, 1975), 384.

⁴⁶E.g., Strobel, 185; Dugmore, 6:272-281; Massyngberde Ford, 384; Strand, “Another Look at ‘Lord’s Day,’” 174-181. While Strand argues for the primary application of κυριακή ἡμέρα to Easter Sunday over the weekly Sunday, he recognizes that this does not apply to Rev 1:10 due to the fact that Revelation originated in the Quartodeciman area (*ibid.*, 180); Alan Johnson, “Revelation,” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* 12 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 425; John P. M. Sweet, *Revelation*, TPINTC (Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press International, 1990), 67.

⁴⁷Dugmore, 275-279, argues that *Did.* 14:1, as interpreted by the fourth-century document *Apostolic Constitutions* 7.30, renders explicit support for the meaning of κυριακή ἡμέρα as a technical term for Easter Sunday; so also Strobel, 185. Dugmore’s view has been refuted by Bacchiocchi, 118-121.

⁴⁸See Geraty, 85-96.

⁴⁹E.g., Friedrich Bleek, *Lectures on the Apocalypse* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1875), 156; J. A. Bengel wrongly concludes that Jerome’s report shows that the early church expected Christ to return at midnight on Sunday (*Gnomon of the New Testament* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1877], 201); cf. Stott, 73.

tradition [was] continued [so] that on the day of the Passover vigil it is not permitted to dismiss the people before midnight, as they await the coming of Christ.”⁵⁰

The Easter Sunday view has been contested and refuted on the basis of different arguments.⁵¹ For instance, Wilfrid Stott argues that the Easter view does not fit the context of the vision of Christ as the High Priest in the sanctuary (Rev 1:12-20), which is, in his view, the Day of Atonement. Since the common name for Easter among early Christians was *πάσχα*, the context shows, he argues, that *κυριακή ἡμέρα* is not connected with the Passover season, but with the Day of Atonement. This argument is weakened by the fact that the scene of Christ among the lampstands reflects not the Day of Atonement, but rather the daily services related to the first apartment of the Hebrew cult as prescribed in the Mishnah.⁵² Numerous studies have demonstrated that the paschal context of Revelation 1 fits neatly into the context of the entire book of Revelation.⁵³

Bauckham refutes the Easter Sunday view on the basis of the argument that there is no conclusive evidence that Easter was ever called simply *κυριακή*⁵⁴ nor that the weekly observance of Sunday and its alleged title *κυριακή* developed from the annual religious festival of Easter Sunday. Any

⁵⁰Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* 4:25.6, in *St. Jerome: Commentary on Matthew*, trans. Thomas P. Scheck, *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation* 117 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 283; cf. Migne, *PL* 26:192.

⁵¹The Easter-Sunday view has been refuted by Strand, “Another Look at ‘Lord’s Day,’” 175-181; Bauckham, 230-231; Bacchiocchi, 118-123.

⁵²The scene of Christ among the seven lampstands evokes ordered priestly officiation: trimming and refilling the lamps that were still burning or removing the wick and old oil from the lamps that had gone out, supplying them with fresh oil, and relighting them (see m. *Tamid* 3:9, in *Mishna*, trans. Herbert Danby [London: Oxford University Press, 1933], 585; also Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services*, updated ed. [Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994], 125).

⁵³See M. D. Goulder, “The Apocalypse as an Annual Cycle of Prophecies,” *NTS* 27 (1981): 342-367; T. Niles, *As Seeing the Invisible* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), 119-125; Richard M. Davidson, “Sanctuary Typology,” in *Symposium on Revelation—Book 1*, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 6 (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 121-122; Jon Paulien, “The Role of the Hebrew Cultus, Sanctuary, and Temple in the Plot and Structure of the Book of Revelation,” *AUSS* 33 (1995): 247-255; Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, 2d ed. (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2009), 32, 34.

⁵⁴Bauckham, 231, overlooks the fact that Irenaeus’s document *Fragments from the Lost Writings of Irenaeus*, which dates to 170, refers to Easter Sunday as *κυριακή* (see *ANF*, 1:569-570).

claim that Rev 1:10 refers to Easter Sunday is, in his view, speculative and without real evidence to support it.⁵⁵

The strongest argument against the Easter Sunday view is that John was from an area that kept the old Quartodeciman reckoning of the resurrection, according to which the Christian Pascha (later Easter) was celebrated on the fourteenth of Nisan of the Jewish lunar calendar (the day of Passover). In referring to κυριακή ἡμέρα, the Revelator wrote to Christians, who, if they observed Easter, also observed the Quartodeciman reckoning.⁵⁶ According to this reckoning, Easter could fall on any day of the week. Therefore, the churches in Asia, by appealing to a tradition that claimed to go back to the apostles and particularly John the Revelator, celebrated Easter annually on the fourteenth of Nisan.⁵⁷ This was unlike the Roman church (and the rest of the churches) that celebrated Easter as resurrection day and, therefore, on Sunday.⁵⁸ Early in the second century, disputes arose involving the churches in Asia Minor of the older tradition and the Roman bishop, which were known as Quartodeciman or Paschal/Easter controversies regarding on which day to celebrate Easter.⁵⁹ The Easter Sunday custom eventually prevailed

⁵⁵Ibid., 231.

⁵⁶See *ibid.*

⁵⁷See *NPNF*², 1:241, n.1; Eusebius mentions Irenaeus’s statement that Polycarp was a disciple of John, a Quartodeciman, and unwavering in sticking to the practice he “observed with John the disciple of the Lord, and the other apostles with whom he had associated” (see *Hist. eccl.* 5.24.16; *NPNF*² 1.244). See also Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.24.1-7; *NPNF*² 1:242-244, which shows that all prominent bishops in Roman Asia were Quartodeciman.

⁵⁸In his letter to Victor, bishop of Rome, Irenaeus reports that the Roman church celebrated Easter on Sunday at the beginning of the second century (cited in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.24.14-17 [*NPNF*², 1:243-244]).

⁵⁹Eusebius reports the decision of the bishops of Asia, led by Polycrates, the bishop of Ephesus, to cling to the tradition of observing Easter on the fourteenth of Nisan, handed down to them by John the Revelator and other apostolic fathers. On this accession, Polycrates wrote to Bishop Victor in Rome, defending the Quartodeciman practice: “For in Asia great luminaries have gone to their rest who will rise on the day of the coming of the Lord. . . . These all kept the fourteenth day of the month as the beginning of the paschal feast, in accordance with the Gospel.” Then he reminded the bishop that “seven of my relatives were bishops and I am the eighth, and my relatives always observed the day when the people put away the leaven.” In turn, Victor reacted by trying to excommunicate the churches in Asia; however, the two sides reconciled through the intervention of Irenaeus and other bishops (*Hist. eccl.* 5.24; *NPNF*², 1:242-244). Melito, the bishop of Sardis in the mid-second century, reported a similar controversy, this time in “Laodicea concerning the time of the celebration of the Passover, which on that occasion had happened to fall at the proper season [i.e., the fourteenth of Nisan]” (*ANF* 8:758). For the discussion of the Quartodeciman controversy, see Frank E. Brightman, “The Quartodeciman Question,” *JTS* 25

over the Quartodeciman practice as a result of decrees issued by different synods, in particular by the Council of Nicea in 325, which condemned the Quartodeciman practice and imposed on the whole church the observance of Sunday as the official day of Easter.⁶⁰

All of this evidence suggests that an understanding of κυριακή ἡμέρα as Easter Sunday is not warranted by the historical evidence. Even though there are statements to confirm that the expression was indeed used to designate Easter Sunday, including in Asia Minor where Christians celebrated Easter in memory of Jesus' resurrection,⁶¹ they are, however, of a much later date (later second century). As such, they cannot be used as proof for a much earlier usage of the phrase in Revelation.⁶²

Κυριακή ἡμέρα as the Emperor's Day

Some commentators suggest that κυριακή ἡμέρα refers to the Emperor's Day.⁶³ Adolf Deissmann shows that the word κυριακός was current in the first century, denoting what belonged to the Roman emperor who claimed the title κύριος ("lord").⁶⁴ Inscriptions seem to confirm that Egypt and Asia Minor had a day known as ἡμέρα Σεβαστή ("Augustus Day," or "Emperor's Day"), dedicated in honor of the Emperor Augustus to commemorate his birthday, and was thus before the Christian era.⁶⁵ Having built on this evidence, some scholars such as R. H. Charles suggest that at least in Asia Minor the first day of each month or a certain day of each week was Σεβαστή or "Emperor's Day"; and when the issue arose concerning "Caesar or Christ," the full phrase "the Lord's day" (or just the adjective "Lord's") was used not only for the first day of the week to symbolize resurrection day, but also in protest against the emperor cult.⁶⁶

(1923/1924): 254-270; C. W. Dugmore, "A Note on the Quartodecimans," *StPatr* 4:411-421; Strobel, 185.

⁶⁰See Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.23.2 (NPNF² 1:241; see also n. 1).

⁶¹Cf., "Fragments from the Lost Writings of Irenaeus," 7 (*ANF* 1:569-570).

⁶²For opposing arguments, see Bauckham, 230-231; see also Bacchiocchi, 118-123.

⁶³E.g., Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 357; James Moffatt, "The Revelation of St. John the Divine," *The Expositor's Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 5:342; Charles, 1:23; Ernst Lohmeyer, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, HNT 16 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1926), 15; William Barclay, *The Revelation of John*, 2d ed., Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 1:43; George R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation*, 2d ed., New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 65.

⁶⁴See Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 357-358.

⁶⁵See further *ibid.*, 358-361.

⁶⁶Charles, 1:13; cf. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 359.

On the basis of linguistics, it is difficult to see a connection between the expressions κυριακή ἡμέρα (“Lord’s day”) and Σεβαστή (“Augustus Day”). First, the two phrases are completely different; no conclusive evidence has been discovered indicating that the phrase κυριακή ἡμέρα was ever used in reaction to the day honoring the emperor. Furthermore, although κύριος is a common title for God in the LXX, there is no evidence that the early Christians used it with reference to Christ in reaction to emperor worship.⁶⁷ If John intended the phrase to be understood in connection with the Emperor’s Day, why did he not use the Greek expression Σεβαστή, well known to the people in the Roman province of Asia, instead of using κυριακή ἡμέρα, which he initiated? It is also unlikely that the Revelator referred to the Lord’s day in Rev 1:10 as the Emperor’s Day at the time when Christians in Asia were being persecuted for refusing to worship the emperor as κύριος.⁶⁸

Κυριακή ἡμέρα as the Sabbath

Another possibility is that κυριακή ἡμέρα means the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. Such an understanding reflects the strong tradition of Seventh-day Adventists.⁶⁹ The phrase κυριακή ἡμέρα (“the Lord’s day”) is not used in the LXX or elsewhere in the NT. Yet the day is reported in the fourth commandment of the Decalogue to be ἡ ἡμέρα ἡ ἑβδόμη σάββατα Κυρίου τῷ Θεῷ σου (“the seventh day is the Sabbath to the Lord your God,” Exod 20:10, LXX). It is also called τὸ σάββατόν σου (“your Sabbath,” Neh 9:14). The expression τὰ σάββατά μου (“my Sabbath”) is used sixteen times in the LXX.⁷⁰ While the LXX reads ἅγια τῷ Θεῷ (“holy [day] to God”) in Isa 58:13, the Hebrew text has “the holy [day] of the Lord.” In addition, this passage in Hebrew also has “my holy day.” All three Synoptics quote Jesus as saying: “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath” (κύριος γάρ ἐστιν τοῦ σαββάτου ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, Matt 12:8; Mark 2:27-28; Luke 6:5).

Thus it is possible that the Christians in Asia could have easily understood the expression κυριακή ἡμέρα as John receiving his vision on the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. To use Paul K. Jewett’s argument, just as the title κύριος was applied to Christ in the conviction that he was the true Lord, so κυριακή ἡμέρα came to be used in the conviction that this day belonged to

⁶⁷As noted by Jewett, 58.

⁶⁸*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7:736.

⁶⁹See *ibid.*, 7:735-736; Strand, “Another Look at ‘Lord’s Day,’” 180; Specht, 127; Desmond Ford, *Crisis! A Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Newcastle, CA: Desmond Ford Publications, 1982), 2:250-251; C. Mervyn Maxwell, *The Message of Revelation*, God Cares (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1985), 2:82-85.

⁷⁰Exod 31:13; Lev 19:3, 30; 26:2; Deut 5:14; Isa 56:4, 6; Ezek 20:12, 13, 16, 20, 21, 24; 22:8; 23:38; 44:24.

him,⁷¹ and there is only one day in the Hebrew and Christian tradition that is designated as “the Lord’s.” This is further supported by the fact that the NT contains neither an explicit nor an implicit reference concerning a change from the seventh-day Sabbath to Sunday. The seventh-day Sabbath was still honored in the NT as the divinely designated day of rest (cf. Luke 23:54-56; Heb 4:4-11). If its change was intended by either Jesus or the apostles, it would be strange that such a change was not clearly specified somewhere in the NT.

The evidence from early Christian authors points to the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath rather than Sunday in Asia Minor in the first half of the second century. One may mention, for instance, the above-cited letter of Ignatius, in which his reference to σαββατίζουτες (“sabbatize”) may mean to observe the weekly Sabbath. This shows that the Christians at that time were still observing the Sabbath. To this, one might add *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, the document describing the martyrdom of Polycarp (70-c.156), which took place in the second half of the second century. Polycarp, the bishop in Smyrna and a disciple of John the Revelator, was captured on ἡ παρασκευή (“the preparation [day]” or Friday) and his martyrdom took place on σαββάτον μέγαλον (“the great Sabbath”).⁷² The use of these two expressions—“the preparation day” and “the day of the great Sabbath” (the latter occurs twice in the document)—shows that the Christians in Smyrna around the middle of the second century were still considering Friday to be ἡ παρασκευή (“the preparation day,” cf. Luke 23:54) for the Sabbath.

On the basis of biblical statements that clearly refer to the seventh-day Sabbath as the Lord’s day, as well as to statements from the ante-Nicene patristic writings that generally show Christians, particularly in Asia Minor, were still observing the seventh-day Sabbath at the time of the writing of Revelation, one might conclude that it would be highly unusual for John to have used the expression κυριακή ἡμέρα for any day other than Saturday. This observation is also affirmed by some who favor the Sunday or Easter Sunday interpretation of the expression κυριακή ἡμέρα. As noted above, Massyngberde Ford, who is in favor of the Easter view, candidly admits: “Most probably the Christians would still be keeping the Sabbath, the seventh day [when Revelation was written].”⁷³ Likewise, Scott, arguing against the Easter view, states that in Ignatius’s passage, referenced above, Christians were bidden not to “sabbatize,” namely not to keep, the weekly Sabbath.⁷⁴

⁷¹See Jewett, 58-59, who argues for Sunday as the Lord’s day.

⁷²See *Mart. Pol.* 7.1; 8.1; 21.1 (ANF 1:40, 43).

⁷³Massyngberde Ford, 384. Dugmore, 279, admits that “as matter of historical fact the Sabbath did not disappear as a day of Christian worship until the late fourth or early fifth century.”

⁷⁴Walter Scott, *Exposition of the Revelation of Jesus Christ* (London: Pickering and Inglis, 1948), 179-180.

Scott thus tacitly admits that the Christians in Asia were still observing the seventh-day Sabbath a decade or two after the writing of Revelation.

Κυριακὴ ἡμέρα *as the Eschatological*
Day of the Lord

Another interpretation is that κυριακὴ ἡμέρα does not refer to a literal weekly day, but to the eschatological day of the Lord.⁷⁵ Accordingly, the Revelator was taken away in vision to witness the events leading toward the eschatological day of the Lord, which were unfolded before him in vision. This was considered a time when God would intervene powerfully in end-time world affairs. The phrase “the day of the Lord” (ἡμέρα κυρίου) is used uniformly in the LXX (Joel 2:11, 31; Amos 5:18-20; Zeph 1:14; Mal 4:5), as well as in the NT (Acts 2:20; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Pet 3:10) with reference to the *eschaton*. Deissmann concludes that in Rev 1:10, grammar and context favor the interpretation of κυριακὴ ἡμέρα as the day of judgment, referred to in the LXX as ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου.⁷⁶

An argument against the figurative understanding of the expression is that since John the Revelator gives the specific place (“the island called Patmos”) and circumstances (“because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus”) under which he received the vision, it would be logical to conclude that the phrase “the Lord’s day” refers to the literal, specific time when John saw the vision.⁷⁷ In spite of the logic in this argument, the textual evidence emphatically suggests that a figurative understanding of the expression should not be discarded easily. The text does not state that John was on Patmos on the Lord’s day when he received the vision, but rather that *while* he was on Patmos he came to be *in the Spirit on the Lord’s day* (ἐν πνεύματι ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ). With regard to the usage of the expression ἐν πνεύματι, John is consistent throughout the book; the other three subsequent occurrences of *in the Spirit* (4:2; 17:3; 21:10) refer to a symbolic rather than a literal time/place.

⁷⁵Including J. Jacobus Wettstein, *Novum Testamentum Graecum* (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1962), 2:750; William Milligan, *The Book of Revelation*, Expositor’s Bible (Cincinnati: Jennings & Graham, 1889), 13; Seiss, 1:20-21; Fenton Hort, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (London: Macmillan, 1908), 15; E. W. Bullinger, *The Apocalypse*, 2d ed. (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1935), 9-14; Deissmann allows for such a possibility (*Light from the Ancient East*, 357, n. 2); Phillip Carrington, *The Meaning of the Revelation* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1931), 77-78; W. Leon Tucker, *Studies in Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1980), 51-52; Louis T. Talbot, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1937), 19; Scott, 36; Bacchiocchi, 123-131; John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), 42.

⁷⁶Adolf Deissmann, “Lord’s Day,” in *Encyclopedia Biblica* (London: Macmillan, 1913), 2815.

⁷⁷See *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7:735.

If, in Rev 1:10, a specific, literal time is intended, it would be inconsistent with the rest of the book.

The major flaw in the eschatological-day-of-the-Lord argument is that John does not use the common OT phrases *ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου* or *ἡμέρα κυρίου* in 1:10, but rather *κυριακὴ ἡμέρα*.⁷⁸ However, one might argue that John could have taken the familiar OT terms and rephrased them.⁷⁹ After carefully analyzing the uses of the adjective *κυριακός* in early Christian writings, Bauckham concludes that “the word *κυριακός* is simply synonymous with (τοῦ) *κυρίου* in all cases where (τοῦ) *κυρίου* is used adjectively with a noun, with the exception of instances of the objective genitive.”⁸⁰ He further demonstrates that Irenaeus and Clement “use *κυριακός* and (τοῦ) *κυρίου* interchangeably and virtually indiscriminately,” and concludes in an objective manner that “from the beginning *κυριακός* was used as a synonym for (τοῦ) *κυρίου*.”⁸¹

This suggests that John’s use of the adjective *κυριακὴ* (“the *Lord’s* day”), rather than the noun *κυρίου* in the genitive case (“the day *of the Lord*”), does not make a substantive change in meaning. For instance, *κυριακὸν δέϊπνον* (“the *Lord’s* supper”) in 1 Cor 11:20 is synonymous with *τράπεζα κυρίου* (“the table of the *Lord*”) in 1 Cor 10:21.⁸² The basic difference between the two phrases in both cases is simply a matter of emphasis. When the emphasis is placed on the word “*Lord*,” then the noun in the genitive case (*κυρίου*) is used; however, when the emphasis is placed on the word “*day*,” then the

⁷⁸See Bauckham, 232. His argument that *κυριακὴ ἡμέρα* was a title for Sunday at the time of the writing of Revelation is not warranted by the evidence.

⁷⁹Oscar Cullmann suggests that “The Christian term *ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου* or *κυριακὴ ἡμέρα* . . . is the Greek translation of *jom* [=yom] *Jahweh*” (*Early Christian Worship* [London: SCM Press, 1966], 92).

⁸⁰Bauckham, 224-225; contra Werner Foerster, “*kurios*, et al.,” in *TDNT* 3:1096. However, Bauckham, 225, wrongly argues that *κυριακὴ ἡμέρα* is “not simply interchangeable with *ἡμέρα (τοῦ) κυρίου*, since by long-established usage the latter referred to the eschatological day of the *Lord*. Thus if early Christians wished to call the first day of the week after their *κύριος*, they could not use the term with *ἡμέρα (τοῦ) κυρίου* without ambiguity and confusion. This, it would seem, is the reason why *κυριακὴ ἡμέρα* early established itself as the common Christian name for Sunday.” Unfortunately, Bauckham, 224, does not follow his own advice that interpretation “must be determined from the sense and context in any particular case.” Instead he supports his position with later material (see n. 36 above). In this case, the substantives that make the most sense and fit the context are *διδαχὴν* or *ζωὴν*, respectively.

⁸¹Bauckham, 246, nn.11-15, 225.

⁸²I am indebted to Foerster, 1096, for this information. Stott, 71, shows how Origin uses the adjective *κυριακὴ* in reference to the final day of resurrection and judgment.

adjective (κυριακή) with a qualifying noun is used.⁸³ This would explain why John employed the expression κυριακή ἡμέρα rather than ἡμέρα (τοῦ) κυρίου in Rev 1:10. Possibly he did it for the purpose of emphasis, wanting to inform the reader that he was transported in vision into the context of the *parousia* and the events leading toward it.

It is thus plausible that, in Rev 1:10, the phrase κυριακή ἡμέρα is used as one of several designations for the day of the *parousia*, e.g., “the day of the Lord” (ἡμέρα κυρίου, 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Pet 3:10); “the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ [Χριστοῦ], 1 Cor 1:8; 2 Cor 1:14); “the great day” (μεγάλη ἡμέρα, Jude 6); “the great day of his wrath” (ἡ ἡμέρα ἡ μεγάλη τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτῶν, Rev 6:17); “the great day of God” (ἡ ἡμέρα ἡ μεγάλη τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ παντοκράτορος, Rev 16:14).⁸⁴ In addition, Jesus calls the day of the *parousia* “his day” (ἡμέρα αὐτοῦ, Luke 17:24). The variety of expressions used in the Bible for the coming of Christ shows that the references to this climactic event in history are not limited to any one specific phrase. The expression κυριακή ἡμέρα could thus function as one of several different designations commonly used in the Bible with regard to the *parousia*.⁸⁵

The eschatological meaning of κυριακή ἡμέρα is clearly supported by the context.⁸⁶ Eschatology is clearly the framework for every vision in the Apocalypse. The day of the *parousia* is introduced in the prologue of the book, which is replete with eschatological statements that are repeated verbatim in the book’s epilogue:

δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει (1:1)	δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει (22:6)
ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς (1:3)	ὁ καιρὸς γὰρ ἐγγύς ἐστιν (22:10)
Ἴδου ἔρχεται μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν (1:7)	ἰδοὺ ἔρχομαι ταχύ (22:7, 12).

The purpose of the book is “to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place” (1:1), suggesting eschatological imminence; this phrase is repeated verbatim in 22:6. Likewise, “the time is near” (1:3) is also

⁸³As correctly pointed out by Bullinger, 12.

⁸⁴Contrary to Bauckham, 225, who, although he concludes that the word κυριακός is simply synonymous with (τοῦ) κυρίου, argues that κυριακή ἡμέρα is not synonymous with (τοῦ) κυρίου because of the traditional usage of the latter with reference to the eschatological day of the Lord; see also Bacchiocchi, 127-128.

⁸⁵See Bacchiocchi, 127-128.

⁸⁶Contrary to Bauckham, 232.

repeated in 22:10. Finally, the climatic statement “Behold, he is coming with the clouds” (1:7) parallels “Behold I am coming quickly” in 22:7, 12.

This suggests that the phrase *δείξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ ὃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει* in 1:1 and 22:6, together with two other parallel statements, function as an *inclusio*, suggesting that the whole content of the book is articulated through the perspective of the eschatological day of the Lord.

It is also especially significant that John’s reference to *κυριακὴ ἡμέρα* occurs after the climatic statement “Behold, he is coming with the clouds” (1:7), and is immediately followed by the reference to a trumpet-like sound, suggesting a divine *theophany*, the personal coming of the Lord in judgment (cf. Matt 24:31; 1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thess 4:16).⁸⁷ Thus it is not without significance that references to the *parousia* and other eschatological designations permeate the messages to the seven churches (chaps. 2–3), denoting a sense of urgency in each message. In addition, the eschatological promises given to the overcomers that conclude each message clearly anticipate their fulfillment in chapters 21–22:

Ephesus—*ἔρχομαί σοι* (I am coming to you, 2:5); “I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God” (2:7).

Smyrna—*δώσω σοι τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς* (I will give you the crown of life, 2:10); “He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death (2:11).

Pergamum—*ἔρχομαί σοι ταχὺ* (I am coming to you quickly, 2:16); “I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it” (2:17).

Thyatira—*ἄχρι οὗ ἂν ἦξω* (until I come, 2:25); *δώσω ὑμῖν ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα ὑμῶν* (I will give to each one of you according to your deeds, 2:23); “I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father; and I will give him the morning star” (2:26–28).

Sardis—*ἦξω ὡς κλέπτης* (I will come like a thief, 3:3); *περιπατήσουσιν μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἐν λευκοῖς* (they will walk with me in white, 3:4); “He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels” (3:5).

Philadelphia—*κάγώ σε τηρήσω ἐκ τῆς ὥρας τοῦ πειρασμοῦ τῆς μελλούσης ἔρχεσθαι ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης* (I also will keep you from the hour of testing which is about to come upon the whole world, 3:10); *ἔρχομαί ταχύ* (I am coming quickly, 3:11); “I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name” (3:12).

⁸⁷In the Hebrew Bible, the trumpets are regularly associated with the eschatological day of the Lord (see, e.g., Isa 27:13; Joel 2:1, 15; Zeph 1:16; Zech 9:14).

Laodicea—δώσω αὐτῷ καθίσαι μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ μου (I will give him to sit with me on my throne, 3:21).

In light of this consideration, one may agree with William Milligan, who states: “From the beginning to the end of the book the Seer is continually in the presence of the great day, with all that is at once so majestic and terrible.”⁸⁸ Likewise Charles H. Welch insists:

The book of Revelation is taken up with something infinitely vaster than days of the *week*. It is solely concerned with the day of the Lord. To read that John became in spirit *on* the Lord’s day (meaning Sunday) tells practically nothing. To read in the solemn introduction that John became in spirit in the Day of the Lord, that day of prophetic import, is to tell us practically everything.⁸⁹

John was thus carried in the Spirit into the sphere of the eschatological day of the Lord to observe the events in history “that must soon take place” (1:1), which were leading toward the Second Coming and the time of the end. When John was carried away by the Spirit in vision to observe future events, he was already experiencing the nearness of the end time. This is why he could speak of the day of the Lord as being at hand. The nearness of the Second Coming added urgency to the message John communicated to his fellow Christians (cf. Rev 1:3; 22:7, 12, 20). He, together with the churches he was addressing, experienced the eschatological day of the Lord as a present reality.

Conclusion

On the basis of available evidence, it is problematic to interpret κυριακὴ ἡμέρα as Sunday. The support for such a view is dubious and insufficient, since it “does not rest on evidence supplied by the Scriptures but upon post-apostolic usage of the phrase, long after John’s time.”⁹⁰ No evidence exists in the patristic writings from the late first century or the early second century to show that κυριακὴ ἡμέρα was used for either the weekly Sunday or Easter Sunday (the latter due, among other things, to the Quartodeciman practice in Asia Minor until the end of the second century).⁹¹ The Emperor’s Day view does not rest on reliable evidence either.

The strongest biblical and historical evidence favors the seventh-day Sabbath. On the other hand, the eschatological character of the book as a

⁸⁸William Milligan, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, Baird Lecture, 1885 (London: MacMillan & Co., 1892), 136.

⁸⁹Charles H. Welch, *This Prophecy: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, 2d ed. (Banstead, UK: Berean Publishing Trust, 1950), 49.

⁹⁰Specht, 127. Dugmore, 274, asserts: “Is it not remarkable how little evidence there is in the New Testament and in the literature of the Sub-Apostolic age that Sunday was the most important day in the Christian Week, if in fact it was the occasion of the supreme act of Christian worship, viz. the Eucharist?”

⁹¹Strand, “The ‘Lord’s Day,’” 350.

whole also supports the eschatological ἡμέρα κυρίου (“the day of the Lord,” cf. 1:7), while the figurative meaning of the expression fits neatly into the symbolic context of the whole book. As was shown before, the whole book of Revelation was apparently written with the eschatological day of the Lord and the events leading up to it in mind. It thus appears that neither the Sabbath as the literal day of the week nor the eschatological day of the Lord may be discarded easily.

It is, therefore, quite possible to see a double meaning in John’s enigmatic expression κυριακή ἡμέρα. It is plausible that the Revelator may have wanted to inform his readers that he was taken ἐν πνεύματι (by the Spirit into vision) to witness the events from the perspective of the eschatological day of the Lord (end-time judgment) and that the vision actually took place on the literal weekly seventh-day Sabbath. The association of the two days—the eschatological day of the Lord and the Sabbath—by John would fit the eschatological connotation of the seventh-day Sabbath in the Hebrew Scriptures and Jewish tradition.⁹²

In Hebrew tradition, the Sabbath functions as the sign of deliverance (cf. Deut 5:15; Ezek 20:10-12).⁹³ The Sabbath is, at the same time, “the climax of the primordial time and the paradigm of the future time.”⁹⁴ *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* indicates that the Sabbath became the memorial of the exodus, “presenting to the picture of the redemption expected in the future the counter-piece of the release achieved in the past.”⁹⁵ It is significant that two passages referring to the Sabbath in Isaiah are associated with eschatological time (58:13-14; 66:23). The same concept is found in Jewish extrabiblical literature. For instance, in the first-century-A.D. Jewish apocalyptic work *Life of Adam and Eve*, “the seventh day is a sign of the resurrection, the rest of the coming age, and on the seventh day ‘the Lord rested from all his works.’”⁹⁶ Such an idea is expressed in Rabbinic literature, in which the Sabbath is seen

⁹²See Theodore Friedman, “The Sabbath: Anticipation of Redemption,” *Judaism* 16/4 (1967): 447; Robert M. Johnston, “The Rabbinic Sabbath,” in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982), 73; Samuele Bacchiocchi, “Sabbatical Typologies of Messianic Redemption,” *JSJ* 17 (1986): 153-176; Harold W. Attridge, *Hebrews*, Hermenia Commentary Series (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 131, n. 85. A few scholars argue for the eschatological concept in the weekly Sunday: André Feuillet, *The Apocalypse* (Staten Island: Alba House, 1964), 85; Cullmann, 7, 91-92; Stott, 73-74; Rowland, 566.

⁹³See Bacchiocchi, 165-166.

⁹⁴Friedman, 447.

⁹⁵Max Joseph, “Sabbath,” in *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York: Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, 1939-1943), 9:295-296.

⁹⁶*L. A. E.* 51:2, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983), 294.

as, Robert Johnston states, “an island of eternity within time, a foretaste of the world to come.”⁹⁷ According to the Mishnah, Psalm 92, which was sung by the Levites in the Temple on the Sabbath, is “a psalm, a song for the time that is to come, for the day that shall be all Sabbath and rest in the life everlasting.”⁹⁸ Theodore Friedman argues that many different expressions concerning the Sabbath in Talmudic literature express the idea that “the Sabbath is the anticipation, the foretaste, the paradigm of life in the world to come. The abundance of such statements is the surest evidence of how deep-rooted and widespread this notion was in the early rabbinic period.”⁹⁹

As Johnston also notes, the eschatological denotation of the Sabbath is closely linked to the idea of “the cosmic week, deduced from Psalm 90:4, according to which six thousand years of earth’s history would be followed by a thousand years of desolation.”¹⁰⁰ He also adds that this idea is further connected with the concept of the eschatological Sabbath in Rabbinic literature.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷Johnston, 73. I am indebted to Johnston for some of the Rabbinic references listed in the section. For an excellent treatment on the subject, see Friedman, 443-452; also George Wesley Buchanan, “Sabbatical Eschatology,” *Christian News from Israel* 18/3-4 (1967): 49-55.

⁹⁸M. *Tamid* 7:4 (Danby, *Mishna*, 589). Friedman, 448, also points to another statement of the Mishnah that links the Sabbath to the world to come: “A man should not go out on (the Sabbath) carrying the sword, a bow, a cudgel, a stick, or a spear . . . The sages say: ‘They are naught save a reproach, for it is written, *And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more*’” (*Shabbath* 6.4 [Danby, 105]). *Midrash on Genesis* contains the following statement attributed to Rabbi Hanina: “There are three incomplete experience phenomena: the incomplete experience of death is sleep; an incomplete form of prophecy is the dream; the incomplete form of the next world is the Sabbath” (*Genesis Rabbah* 17.5; 44.17; trans. H. Freedman [London: Soncino Press, 1939], 136, 372); Johnston, 73, also finds a parallel to the notion of the eschatological Sabbath in the *Midrash on the Ten Commandments*, in which lost souls are given a temporary reprieve from punishment in Gehenna on the Sabbath. At the Sabbath eve, an angel in charge of souls would shout: “Come out of Gehenna!” Thus the souls are not judged on the Sabbath. However, when the Sabbath closes, the angel cries again: “Come out and come to the house of the shadow of death and chaos.”

⁹⁹Friedman, 443.

¹⁰⁰Johnston, 73; cf. b. *Sanh.* 97a, b (trans. I. Epstein [London: Soncino Press, 1936], 654).

¹⁰¹The same idea is also expressed in *Pirke R. El.*, chap. 19, according to which God “created seven aeons, and of them all He chose the seventh aeon only; the six aeons are for the going in and going out for war and peace. The seventh aeon is entirely Sabbath and rest in the life everlasting” (trans. Gerald Friedlander [New York: Benjamin Blon, 1971], 141); see also Buchanan, 52-53.

The eschatological concept of the Sabbath also appears in the NT. According to Matthew, Jesus advised his disciples to pray to God so that their necessary flight from Jerusalem during the Roman invasion would not occur in the winter nor on the Sabbath (24:20). The context suggests that judgment upon Jerusalem typologically foreshadowed the final judgment of the *eschaton*.¹⁰² A similar concept is expressed by the author of Hebrews, wherein the seventh-day Sabbath has eschatological significance as the heavenly rest for the wandering pilgrims (4:4-10).¹⁰³

The Revelator's own situation on Patmos, as well as the situation of the churches he was addressing (cf. Revelation 2–3), made the Sabbath meaningful as a foreshadowing of the future reality of the day of the Lord. John describes his situation on the island as being “in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance” because of his faithfulness to the gospel (1:9). Thus within the climate of his own Patmos experience and the visionary experience he had on the seventh-day Sabbath, he was carried away in the Spirit into the sphere of the eschatological day of the Lord to observe the historical events “that must soon take place” (1:1); in other words, those events leading up to the Second Coming and the time of the end. It was on this “Lord's day” that, as he claimed, he had an encounter with the resurrected Lord, which for him made that Sabbath a foretaste of the eschatological rest he would enter into together with the faithful of all ages (chaps. 21–22).

When John was carried by the Spirit in vision, he was already experiencing the nearness of the end. This is why he could speak of the day of the Lord as being at hand. The nearness of the Second Coming added urgency to the message he communicated to his fellow Christians (cf. Rev 1:3; 22:7, 12, 20). Together with the churches he was addressing, the Revelator experienced the eschatological day of the Lord as a present reality. This would explain why he evidently avoided the use of the technical expression *ἡμέρα κυρίου*, which would have one-sidedly referred to the eschatological day of the Lord. Just as Paul initiated the expression *κυριακὸν δεῖπνον* (“Lord's Supper”) in 1 Cor 11:20 to incorporate what was commonly known as “the breaking of the bread” and the notion of *κοινωνία* into one concept, so John the Revelator initiated the phrase *κυριακὴ ἡμέρα*, not previously used, in order to incorporate the two biblical concepts—the Sabbath and the eschatological day of the Lord—into a single idea.

¹⁰²Donald Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, WBC 33b (Dallas: Word, 1995), 703; Robert Mounce, *Matthew*, NIBC 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1985), 222.

¹⁰³See Attridge, 129-131.

THE SEVENTH-DAY SABBATH AND SABBATH THEOLOGY IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION: CREATION, COVENANT, SIGN

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The Biblical Sabbath and Scripture's Last Book

The word “Sabbath” is never mentioned in the book of Revelation; yet, as “the last book of the Bible,” Revelation gives promise of yielding Scripture’s “final word”¹ on the seventh-day Sabbath for those who would follow Christ.

Revelation’s “last words” are significant because “they memorably summarize and conclude centuries of biblical insight, counsel, and experience.”² There “all the books of the Bible meet and end.”³ So much so that when reading Revelation one is plunged fully into the atmosphere of the OT— theologically, spiritually, morally.⁴ Through images drawn from the past both the present and the future unfold in a way that greatly resembles the past and in which the same relationships of cause and consequence are observable that have been at work throughout God’s dealings with humanity.⁵ The cascade of OT allusions seems to assert that no matter the times, spiritual/moral issues

¹See M. Eugene Boring, *Revelation*, ed. James Luther (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1989), 1-4; Eugene H. Peterson, *Reversed Thunder: The Revelation of John and the Praying Imagination* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1988), 26, 362.

²Peterson, 1-2.

³Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2005), 585. As Richard Bauckham has aptly said, Revelation is “the climax of prophecy,” thereby bringing to consummate fulfillment the prophetic tradition of Israel (*The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993], x-xi).

⁴No NT book is as saturated with the OT as is Revelation. The more-than-two-thousand references of one kind or another to the OT means that the study of Revelation ties us to the OT in many ways. Even a conservative estimate works out at about one allusion for every verse. The larger percentage of the hundreds of symbols in the book is best understood by reference to the OT. See Bauckham, x-xi; G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 76-99; Steve Moyise, ed., *The Old Testament in the New: An Introduction* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 117; Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, ed. Moisés Silva (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 25-27; Stephen S. Smalley, *The Revelation to John: Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005), 8-10. See also Jon Paulien, “Criteria and the Assessment of Allusions to the Old Testament in the Book of Revelation,” in *Studies in the Book of Revelation*, ed. Steven Moyise (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2001), 113; idem, *The Deep Things of God* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2004), 135-136.

⁵David A. deSilva, “Final Topics: The Rhetorical Functions of Intertexture in Revelation 14:14–16:21,” in *The Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse in the New Testament*, ed. Duane F. Watson (Atlanta: SBL, 2002), 240.

have not changed because both human nature and God's truth have remained constant.⁶ Biblical imagery is thus intentionally drawn from the OT in order to craft a theological vision that both incorporates the earlier spiritual/moral issues and nuances their enduring import more sharply toward present and last things (cf. 1 Cor 10:6-11; Rom 15:4).⁷

Our question here is whether Revelation's pregnant summary of Scripture includes the biblical seventh-day Sabbath. Would not this book, so saturated with OT imagery, include in its allusion medley the seventh-day Sabbath as one of the most prevailing of OT concerns?⁸ One would expect so, or at least not be surprised to find a Sabbath allusion somewhere—affirmed or negated, substituted or used theologically as metaphor.

However, if the seventh-day Sabbath appears nowhere in Revelation's purview of things, then why not? Why theologically would the Sabbath not be an explicit or at least implicit part of Revelation's biblical review and warning? What could or would take the Sabbath's prominent place in the biblical scheme of things from which Revelation so consistently draws?

If, on the other hand, Revelation does incorporate the biblical Sabbath within its theological vision, how would it do so? In this book full of direct and indirect OT allusions, bewildering symbols, subtle imagery, tacit concerns, and underlying theology, would one expect some reference or subtle hint to the Sabbath? Why would the Sabbath as a concept be implied, while the word "Sabbath" is never mentioned? Could it be assumed that the biblically informed reader would intuit the issues at play in the text so the writer need not mention the word at all? More importantly, why would possible Sabbath allusions appear quite ambiguous compared to other OT imagery from which Revelation draws? What would there be about the seventh-day Sabbath that one would not need to clearly articulate it in the text?⁹

⁶Craig S. Keener, *Revelation*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 40.

⁷Opinions differ as to whether John was faithful to the contexts of the OT allusions or largely disregarded their original meanings in order to make his own theological statement or express his own theological vision. We would affirm the position that John was faithful to both the contexts and the theological/moral issues at play in those contexts of the OT allusions. He does not do a new thing, but rather brings urgency and fresh focus to enduring spiritual/moral issues. See Bauckham, x-xi; Moyise, 126; Osborne, 25.

⁸Scott J. Hafemann, *The God of Promise and the Life of Faith: Understanding the Heart of the Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2001), 41-81; Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Sabbath in the Pentateuch," in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, ed. Kenneth A. Strand (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982). See Gen 2:1-3; Exod 31:13; Ezek 20:12, 20; Isa 56:3; 58; cf. Heb 4:3-11; Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15. Other OT themes in Revelation include creation, covenant, judgment, the sovereignty of God, holiness, idolatry, temple, Jerusalem, flood, commandments, worship, Satan, Babylonian exile, the exodus, mark, book of life, Tree of Life.

⁹The superscription for Psalm 92 states that it is a "A Psalm, a Song for the

These questions underline the problem at hand: Does Revelation's pregnant summary of Scripture include the biblical seventh-day Sabbath, and how forceful, patent, and positive might that inclusion be?

This study suggests that the biblical seventh-day Sabbath is both a tacit concern and an underlying theological-sign concept with regard to Revelation's worldview of covenant in relation to creation and redemptive re-creation. The investigation explores the theological significance of the seventh-day Sabbath in light of Revelation's creation/re-creation, covenant, exodus, and Babylonian-captivity motifs, which are purposely drawn from the OT's narrative and concerns. It includes identifying specific fourth-commandment allusions within the book's text. Theological, spiritual, and ethical implications of Sabbath with respect to the fundamental end-time crisis of humanity in relation to its Covenant Creator are also examined. This approach asserts a covenant/creation bridge between the OT (Genesis) and the NT (Revelation), in that the book of Revelation not only parallels Genesis thematically, but also fulfills, completes, and perfects God's creation into redemptive re-creation and the seventh-day Sabbath in the eternal rest of God.¹⁰ It will further assert that the phrase "the Lord's day" in the book's opening vision (1:10) is an intentional marker that alerts the thoughtful reader to critical issues to come and, as such, is an unambiguous reference to the seventh-day Sabbath.

Sabbath day," and yet it nowhere mentions the Sabbath.

¹⁰The fundamental principle reflected in Genesis and the prophetic vision of the end times in Revelation is that "the last things will be like the first things." The allusions to Genesis 1–2 in Revelation 21–22 illustrate the role that the early chapters of Genesis played in shaping the form and content of Revelation's scriptural vision of the future. Theologically, the term "beginning" in biblical Hebrew (as per Gen 1:1) marks a starting point, which already anticipates the consummation of history at the end of time. Already in Gen 1:1, the concept of "the last days" fills the mind of the reader: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; . . . Behold, I am making all things new" (Rev 21:1, 5; cf. Isa 65:17). In this context of beginnings, the emphasis on God's "rest" on the seven day (Gen 2:1-3) forms an important part of the understanding of what lies in the future. See Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Eugene, OR; Wipf and Stock, 2006); John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 83-84, 96-97. For further discussion of the relationship of the biblical beginning (protology) and ending (eschatology) and how the early chapters of Genesis are integrated with the rest of Genesis, Genesis with the rest of the OT, and the OT with the NT, see William J. Dumbrell, *The End of the Beginning: Revelation 21–22 and the Old Testament* (Home Bush, NSW: Lancer, 1985); Warren Austin Gage, *The Gospel of Genesis: Studies in Protology and Eschatology* (Winona Lake, IN: Carpenter, 1984). "From the beginning to the end the biblical authors present a consistent, albeit selective (therefore interpretive) history. . . . It is this capacity of the biblical authors to interpret history, expressing a commonality of theme due to a consistency in the divine governance of history, that makes possible a comprehensive study of protology and eschatology" (ibid., 4).

We will begin with Revelation's creation/re-creation, covenant, exodus, and Babylonian-captivity motifs. We want to understand just how dominating these key motifs really are within Revelation's vision of reality.¹¹ In doing so, it may seem at first as though this study is more a theology of the Sabbath than it is about the Sabbath in the book of Revelation. However, these motifs yield considerable implications regarding the possible presence of the seventh-day Sabbath within the book's scheme of things. They provide important facets of Revelation's worldview from which exegetical implications of potential verbal, thematic, or theological allusions within the book can be better identified and investigated.¹² From this vantage point, we will explore specific Sabbath allusions and possibilities within the book's text. This includes (1) the verbal and thematic allusion to the fourth commandment (14:7), (2) reference to the Lord's Day (1:10), and (3) the frequent use of the number seven and the word "rest."

This study assumes the author of Genesis meant his account of creation and the flood to be understood literally and historically, i.e., a six-day creation¹³ and a global flood. Revelation's perspective on these biblical themes is in keeping with other NT writers (Matt 19:4-5; Luke 17:26-29; Heb 11:1-7; 2 Pet 3:3-7). This study also understands "covenant" in terms of God's "eternal covenant" with human beings (Heb 13:20; Rev 14:6), thus demonstrating the essential unity of his work in creation, redemption, and restoration, rather than in the disjointed consecutive phases of dispensational covenant theology.¹⁴

¹¹Mathilde Frey's brief, yet cogent, survey of some of these pervasive themes (covenant, creation, sign) does not adequately highlight just how dominating these key motifs really are within Revelation's vision of reality. Readers can observe a few footnotes along the way and may conclude there is something to her position. Most will not take the time to go in-depth enough for the text rather than the theologian to speak and to be assured enough that she is in reality reflecting the depth of the text. Her brevity enables her position to be easily dismissed as just that, her position ("The Theological Concept of the Sabbath in the Book of Revelation," in *You Have Strengthened Me: Biblical and Theological Studies in Honor of Gerhard Pfandl in Celebration of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Martin Pröbstle [St. Peter am Hart, Austria: Seminar Schloss Bogenhofen, 2007], 223-239)

¹²The writer understands that exegetical implications and demands are also at play in articulating the worldview-creating motifs.

¹³Norman R. Gulley, "Basic Issues between Science and Scripture: Theological Implications of Alternative Models and the Necessary Basis for the Sabbath in Genesis 1-2," *JATS* 14/1 (2003): 195-288; Jiří Moskala, "The Sabbath in the First Creation Account," *JATS* 13/1 (2002): 55-66; Randall W. Younker, "A Literal Reading of Genesis," *Perspective Digest* 15/3 (2010): 34-35.

¹⁴See Walter Brueggemann, *The Covenanted Self: Explorations in Law and Covenant* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999); Gerhard F. Hasel and Michael G. Hasel, *The Promise: God's Everlasting Covenant* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2002); Hans K. LaRondelle, *Our Creator Redeemer: An Introduction to Biblical Covenant Theology* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2005); Skip MacCarty, *In Granite or Ingrained: What the Old and New*

Entering Revelation's World

Revelation unfolds a worldview in which God, human existence, and the spiritual/moral conflict at play are both spiritually and morally framed.¹⁵ As with any worldview, there is narrative, theology, and ritual.¹⁶ The reader is invited to enter this explicit world, assured that what the book says about God, human beings, moral/spiritual issues, central characters, and the moral/spiritual nature of the conflict is, in fact, both true and God-given (1:1; 21:5; 22:6, 18-19).¹⁷ The foundational themes articulated in Revelation's worldview provide a broad conceptual canvas against which any discussion of the Sabbath in the book must take place. As the prophecies of Revelation are especially built on the greatest and key events from sacred history, these foundational themes include creation and covenant in relation to the exodus and the exile to Babylon.¹⁸ It is within these pervasive spiritual and morally orienting backdrop themes that Sabbath implications are asserted and explored.

Covenants Reveal about the Gospel, the Law, and the Sabbath (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2007); O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980).

¹⁵Revelation puts human beings in a spiritual/moral context. It constructs a world of vision. It tells who the players are, what condition human life is in, where the world is, and where it is headed; and it informs the reader as to what questions need to be answered. Revelation's worldview provides foundational themes and integrating motifs that facilitate reflection on the book's text and theology. This worldview provides the metaphysical map, the larger moral/spiritual vision against which the book's individual themes are to be considered and find meaning. See David L. Barr, *Tales of the End: A Narrative Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 1998), 3-5; Beale, 171-177; Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 181-184; Smalley, 16-19.

¹⁶Worldview is manifested in three ways: through narrative, rational, and ritual components. See Dennis P. Hollinger, *Choosing the Good: Christian Ethics in a Complex World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 63; David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept*, foreword Arthur Frank Holmes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

¹⁷The apocalyptic medium establishes its own world, which one must enter in order to fully grasp it. The modern reader enters a worldview vastly different from his or her natural perspective. The first task, then, is to understand Revelation's outlook. Revelation is wrapped in a worldview and language quite alien to modern times. See Joseph R. Jeter, "Revelation-Based Preaching: Homiletical Approaches," in *Preaching Through the Apocalypse: Sermons from Revelation*, ed. Cornish R. Rogers and Joseph R. Jeter (St. Louis: Chalice, 1992), 10; Richard Melick, "Preaching and Apocalyptic Literature," in *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching*, ed. Michael Duduit (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 382-383; Larry Paul Jones and Jerry L. Sumney, *Preaching Apocalyptic Texts* (St. Louis: Chalice, 1999), 9-23.

¹⁸Jon Paulien, *What the Bible Says about the End-Time* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1994), 41-71; Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the*

Sabbath and Creation

Revelation unfolds a vibrant and sustained confession of God as Creator.¹⁹ It presupposes the Genesis creation narrative and posits the overarching worldview that “the whole of finite reality exists by God the Creator’s gift of existence.”²⁰ It sets the creation of the universe at the heart of its vision of the throne (chaps. 4 and 5), where the “Creation Song of the Elders” poignantly expresses themes such as the central way of characterizing both God and finite reality.²¹ The sovereign creative energy of God, expressed in the profound phrase “for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created” (4:11),²² concentrates all of Genesis 1 into a single thought.²³ God’s creative power includes both the original act of creation (they were created) and his ongoing preservation of the created order (they existed).²⁴ The deeply personal nature of creation (“by your will they . . . were created”) is likewise celebrated. God not only created “all that is,” he willfully “intended” to bring the universe into existence.²⁵ Thus God on his heavenly throne is praised without end by his court of throne-room guardians, who shout and sing about their holy Creator (4:11).

This understanding of God as the personal, transcendent source of all things permeates Revelation’s theology and moral vision.²⁶ The creation motif thus situates the creature relative to its Creator. It provides a basis for worship and the foundation for moral life.²⁷ God is identified as the Creator of all things as a motivation for people to worship him instead of the creation

Book of Revelation (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2002), 19.

¹⁹See fuller discussion of the theological and ethical implications of Revelation’s central and pervasive creation theme in Larry L. Lichtenwalter, “Creation and Apocalypse,” *JATS* 15/1 (2004): 125-137. David Aune misses the import of this central theological theme and overarching worldview when he suggests that the emphasis on God as *creator* is not a central way of characterizing God in Revelation (*Revelation 1–5*, WBC 52a (Dallas: Word, 1997), 312.

²⁰Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, WBC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 50.

²¹Kendell H. Easley, *Revelation*, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 78-79.

²²Unless otherwise indicated, all biblical passages will come from the NASB.

²³*Ibid.*, 79. In Genesis, God’s explosive voice speaks the world and most things in it into existence (Gen 1:6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 29; Ps 33:6, 9), thus expressing his *will* through his creative word.

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵Boring, 106.

²⁶Lichtenwalter, 126-131.

²⁷Jacques B. Doukhan, *Secrets of Revelation: The Apocalypse Through Hebrew Eyes* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002), 126.

(14:7; cf. 9:20).²⁸ Such motivation also reflects a moral impulse in that they “fear God and give glory to him” for “the fear of God” is the beginning of moral life (14:7; cf. Deut 6:2; Eccl 12:13; Pss 19:19; 34:11-14; 36:1; Prov 3:7; 8:13; 10:16).²⁹

Not surprisingly, the subject of creation nuances the book’s vision and message of the end. In an eschatologically oriented creation statement, a mighty angel swears to God the Creator that there will no longer be any further *chronos* or measured time in the finishing of the mystery of God (10:5-7).³⁰ When an angel proclaims the “eternal gospel” to all people on earth, calling them to repentance in view of the judgment, which already “has come,” the substance of this gospel is a call to recognize their Creator by worshiping him:³¹ “Fear God and give glory to him, because the hour of his judgment has come; worship him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of water” (14:6). It is a prophetic and epochal end-time call, which both leads up to the second coming of Christ and produces the final harvest of the earth (14:6-14).³² This suggests that the question of creation is viewed as one of the moral/spiritual issues human beings are confronted with not only throughout history, but, particularly, also in the end-time leading up to the *eschaton*. The last rebellion of the dragon and his cohorts, then, is an attempt to draw the whole world into a unified rebellion against the Creator God.³³ The final crisis, in relation to worship by the faithful remnant, revolves around this critical creation worldview and the worship of the Creator God.

The ultimate character of Revelation’s eschatological age is a completely new creation: “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away” (21:1).³⁴ The final redemptive act is a creative

²⁸Beale, 753.

²⁹Doukhan, 124. See Lichtenwaller’s, 131-136, discussion of the ethical implications of creation in Revelation.

³⁰In the vision of the mighty angel with the little scroll that lay open in his hand, Revelation expands on God’s creation by explicitly mentioning the contents of the three divisions of the created reality (the heavens, earth, and sea)—“all that is” in each part is likewise stated three times for emphasis (10:6). As the angel’s posture (one foot on the sea, another on the land, right hand lifted toward heaven) encompasses all the spheres of creation, ascending from the sea’s depths to the dry land to the height of heaven, so also the Creator who secures his oath controls all spheres, descending from heaven’s heights to dry land to the depths. See Dennis E. Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2001), 161-162.

³¹Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 48.

³²David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, WBC 52b (Waco: Word, 1998), 848-849; Bauckham, 94-98; Hans K. LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible: The Biblical-Contextual Approach* (Sarasota, FL: First Impressions, 1997), 362-369; Stefanovic, 436, 456-464.

³³Anthony MacPherson, “The Mark of the Beast as a ‘Sign Commandment’ and ‘Anti-Sabbath’ in the Worship Crisis of Revelation 12–14,” *AUSS* 43 (2005): 283.

³⁴Dumbrell, 165.

act (Revelation 21–22).³⁵ The biblical witness begins with creation (Genesis) and ends with the New Jerusalem heralding the dawn of the new creation (Revelation). The remarkable and moving presentation of biblical imagery details the magnificence of the new event, which fulfills every biblical and human expectation. Moral vision for the new corresponds with the ethic and unity of life intended in the original (21:8, 27; 22:14–15; cf. 2 Pet 3:13). Redemptive re-creation thus includes the ethical.³⁶ Clearly, the biblical narrative moves between these two poles. This raises the crucial question between creation and redemptive re-creation in Revelation's theology.³⁷ The connection highlights the cosmic scope of Revelation's theological and moral horizon, within which its primary concern with the human world is set.³⁸ "The universality of the eschatological new beginning corresponds to the derivation of all things from God's original creative act."³⁹ God is the ground of ultimate hope for the future creation of the world.

Creation is thus not confined forever to its own immanent possibilities, but is wonderfully open to the fresh creative possibilities of its Creator.⁴⁰ This biblical creation/re-creation bridge is more than conceptual. It is rooted in the Creator.

The natural implication of Revelation's creation worldview for any discussion of the Sabbath is that biblically there is no creation account without the seventh-day Sabbath.⁴¹ In the Hebrew Scripture, from which Revelation articulates its worldview, creation and Sabbath are inseparable (Gen 2:1–4a; Exod 20:8–11). Neither creation nor the Sabbath can be separated from the Creator God or the proper response of human beings who would worship

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Revelation's ultimate aim is ethical (Beale, 184–186). It relates to everyday life. This is borne out by the conclusion in 22:6–21, which is an intentional expansion of the moral implications of the prologue in 1:1–3, and especially by the ethical emphasis of 1:3 (cf. the phraseological parallels in 22:7b, 9b, 10b, 18a, 19a). Biblical eschatology always casts a moral vision. It generates an ethic to go along with it, or it fails to keep its promise of offering a unity of life and the possibility of total fulfillment. See Carl E. Braaten, *Eschatology and Ethics: Essays on the Theology and Ethics of the Kingdom of God* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974), 20.

³⁷The imagery encompasses both continuity and discontinuity (2 Pet 3:13; Isa 65:17). There is an eschatological renewal of creation, not its replacement by another. For the first time since 1:8, the one who sits on the throne speaks directly: "Behold, I am making all things new" (21:5a). The key significance of the words echoing Isaiah is underlined by God's own command to John to write them down (21:5b). There is paradox in that, although a complete new beginning is anticipated, the spiritual experience of the believer is preserved (Dumbrell, 167).

³⁸Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 50.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid., 48. This eschatological hope for the future of God's whole creation includes the hope of bodily resurrection (21:4; 1:18; 2:8, 10; 20:4–6).

⁴¹MacPherson, 282.

him. Scripture itself makes the bridge both thematic and verbal. Why would it be any different in Revelation? If the biblical creation worldview so dominates the book of Revelation, wouldn't the Sabbath also be assumed and implied?

In particular, and in relation to this study, the question of the seventh-day Sabbath is bound up with Revelation's promise of a perfected creation.⁴² The literary structure of Genesis places the Sabbath as the final and climatic act of God's creation on the seventh-day—"placing human beings in a vivid mutual relationship with their Holy Creator, worshiping him."⁴³ Creation was thus actually finished or consummated on the seventh day. The seventh day brings the creation week to an end and, therefore, to its goal.⁴⁴ This day alone is sanctified.⁴⁵ In doing so, God endowed this day with a special relationship to himself, who alone is intrinsically holy (1 Sam 2:2; Lev 11:44; Isa 6:3; cf. Rev 15:4; 4:8).⁴⁶ Thus in Scripture, God, holiness, creation, and Sabbath are integrally linked (Gen 2:1-4a; Exod 20:8-11; Isa 43:15; Rev 4:8-11). It is significant that the biblical concept of the *holy* first appears in relation to the Sabbath.⁴⁷ Worship, ethics, and the unity of human moral life are envisioned in this intentional linkage of the Sabbath with the *holy* (Gen 2:1-4a; Exod 20:8-11; 31:13; Ezek 20:12).

The action taken by God on the seventh day gives expression to the total purpose intended for creation.⁴⁸ Later biblical connections made between creation, Sabbath, and the sanctuary further nuance God's intended purpose.⁴⁹ As the climax of creation, the Sabbath became "a sanctuary in time," not space,

⁴²Dumbrell, 40.

⁴³Moskala, 55-66. The chiasmic center of the Genesis account of the Sabbath is God's blessing and act of making it—the seventh day—holy (2:2-3). See Kenneth A. Strand, "The Sabbath," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 493-495.

⁴⁴Dumbrell, 40.

⁴⁵Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis; Chapters 1-17* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 1:143. The first thing consecrated by God in this world is not a thing or a place, but a moment in time.

⁴⁶Roy Gane, "Sabbath and the New Covenant," *JATS* 10/1 (1999): 314. See also Mathilde Frey, "The Creation Sabbath: Theological Intentionality of the Concept of Holiness in the Pentateuch (unpublished paper presented to the Adventist Theological Society Annual Meeting, Providence, Rhode Island, 2008), 1-11. How can a day be holy? "It must be consecrated *in relation to* beings who are affected by it. The only way for intelligent beings to make/treat time as holy is by altering their behavior. Thus, God altered His behavior on the seventh day of Creation, the archetype of the weekly Sabbath (cf. Hasel 1982: 23), and proclaimed the day holy" (Gane, 314).

⁴⁷See Frey, "The Creation Sabbath," 1-11.

⁴⁸Dumbrell, 177.

⁴⁹See Gregory K. Beal, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, *New Studies in Biblical Theology* 17 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004), 66-74; Gregory K. Beale, "Eden, the Temple, and the Church's Mission in the New Creation," *JETS* 48/1 (2005): 5-31; Dumbrell, 35-76.

that God creates by himself.⁵⁰ As Israel's earthly tabernacle and temple were reflections and recapitulations of the first temple of the Garden of Eden—a unique place of God's presence where Adam walked and talked with God (Gen 3:8)—Revelation's (21–22) new-creation allusions to Genesis 2–3 bring promise of the final presence of God among his people, who see him face to face (21:3–5; 22:4).⁵¹ The envisioned sabbatical consummation is fully and gloriously realized (21:3–7). Interestingly, in a vision replete with both temple and Sabbath-rest imagery, neither the new temple nor the Sabbath is conspicuously present in Revelation 21–22. As the Sabbath of creation ushers in a complete relationship with God (Gen 2:1–4a), so also does Revelation's sabbatical consummation and the moral vision that that consummation engenders in relation to eternal fellowship with God (Rev 21:1–8, 27; 22:1–15).⁵² As creation's temporal seventh-day Sabbath rest provides the typology here, it also implies the enduring nature of the weekly seventh-day Sabbath in biblical thinking.

Sabbath and Covenant

Revelation's portrait of the *eschaton* includes the fulfillment of the divine covenant with human beings. The descent of the New Jerusalem at the close of the millennium, symbolizing God's everlasting presence, marks the consummation of an intimate covenant commitment: a connection rendered unmistakable by the use of Lev 26:11–12 in Rev 21:3.⁵³ The language is unambiguous in its echo of the pervading biblical concept of covenant (21:3, 7).⁵⁴ No greater statement of a promise kept can be found in Scripture. Here, too, God's voice is heard pronouncing the conclusion of earth's restoration—"Behold, I am making all things new"⁵⁵—which, in effect, affirms the Creator's covenant faithfulness to his creation (21:5).⁵⁵ The triumphant divine cry, "It is

⁵⁰Abraham J. Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Wolff, 1951), 29; Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 2285.

⁵¹Beale, "Eden, the Temple, and the Church's Mission in the New Creation."

⁵²See Dumbrell, 35–42, 71, 177–178.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 78–79; Johnson, 304–305; T. M. Moore, *I Will Be Your God: How God's Covenant Enriches Our Lives* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2002), 183–190.

⁵⁴Indeed the covenant established in Sinai is now fulfilled, as seen in the Holiness Code of Lev 26:11–13: "I will make My dwelling among you. . . . I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people" (cf. Lev 21:3). This promise was repeated often as a note of comfort and hope for God's beleaguered people (Exod 29:45; Jer 30:22; 31:33; Ezek 37:27). V. 7 expands this covenant imagery with the reality that individual overcomers will be children of God, with all the rights of heirs: "I will be his God and he will be My son" (cf. Exod 29:45). See David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, WBC 52C (Waco: Word, 1998), 1123.

⁵⁵Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 50–53. It is fulfillment of what was announced earlier through Isaiah: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; The former things will not be remembered or come to mind" (Isa 65:17; cf. 43:19). In the biblical picture, creation is prior to covenant and is the foundation

complete” (21:6), confirms the eschatological new creation and redemption, now completed in the descent of the New Jerusalem from heaven.⁵⁶

This covenant consummation in Revelation’s final vision echoes significant covenant expressions found elsewhere in the book. The designation of the redeemed as a kingdom of priests (1:6; cf. 5:10; 20:6) is drawn from the covenant experience of the exodus, in which redeemed Israel is bound to God in sacred covenant and commissioned to a special priestly task among the nations of the world (Exod 19:5-6; cf. Isa 61:6; 1 Pet 2:9-10).⁵⁷ God’s self-designation—“the One who is and who was and who is to come” (1:4, 8; cf. 11:17; 16:5)—interprets his OT covenant name YHWH—“I AM WHO I AM” (Exod 3:14).⁵⁸ The drama of the Lamb and the sealed scroll (4:1–11:19) concludes with the most specific covenant language in the Apocalypse: “And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple” (11:19). This clear reference to covenant (ἡ κιβωτὸς τῆς διαθήκης αὐτοῦ) is an integral part of Revelation’s transition into the last portion of the book, namely, both encapsulating the heart of everything that has gone before and signaling what lies behind every issue that unfolds ahead—covenant realities.⁵⁹ It asserts that God’s covenant with humanity through history is the stage on which the divine drama is performed in the book of Revelation.⁶⁰

of the covenant and covenantal relationship between God and man. See Hasel, *The Promise*, 14.

⁵⁶Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 7; Smalley, 540.

⁵⁷Waldemar Janzen, *Exodus* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2000), 232, 234. Revelation follows this pattern of covenant redemption and commissioning (1:5-6; 5:10; 10:11; 14:6-12; 18:4; 20:6). Interestingly, the encounter of Moses with God at the burning bush and his subsequent commissioning (3:1-12) is repeated for all of Israel (Exod 19:1-6). Moses is commissioned and then Israel as a nation is commissioned. In Revelation, John is first commissioned, and then the church, the people of God as a whole, are commissioned. See *ibid.*, 234. In keeping with the NT, the church is seen as a new exodus (covenant) community, fulfilling the high priestly role of the OT (1:6; 1 Pet 2:9-10). See Osborne, 65; Joseph L. Trafton, *Reading Revelation: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, ed. Charles H. Talbert (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2005), 21, 23, 201.

⁵⁸Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 28-30; Easley, 14.

⁵⁹On the duo-directionality of Revelation’s transition passages, see Paulien, *The Deep Things of God*, 115-119; Stefanovic, 26, 362. The striking parallels between the language of Revelation 5–9 and the OT covenant/curse passages suggest that the scene of the opening of the seals and the sounding of the trumpets has to do with the NT covenant established with Christ and the consequences of breaking, rejecting, or opposing it, and for those who identify with it. See David Marshall, *Apocalypse! Has the Countdown Begun?* (Lincolnshire, UK: Autumn House, 2000), 60.

⁶⁰Michael S. Horton, *Covenant and Eschatology: The Divine Drama* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 15.

It is also the context in which both moral choice and accountability are envisioned.⁶¹

The theme of the covenant is crucial for the reading of Revelation.⁶² No theology of the book is complete without considering its covenant backdrop.⁶³ Correspondingly, no biblical theology of God's covenant is complete without considering the covenant consummation therein.⁶⁴ In Revelation, all God's previous covenants are integrated into one glorious consummation in the New Jerusalem, thus demonstrating the essential unity of God's work in creation, redemption, and restoration.⁶⁵ No more concrete category can unite the beginning and the end, creation and redemptive re-creation, history and eschatology, the individual and the community, divine and human agency, moral life and accountability (judgment), than Scripture's own method of moral contextualization: the covenant.⁶⁶

With respect to creation and redemptive re-creation, covenant provides a sense of *relationality*.⁶⁷ Since the Creator of all reality is a person, all of that reality which God voluntarily produces exists in relationship. God not only shares a divine relationship to creation, but has also entered into covenant with all creation—the natural world and human beings alike. Covenant establishes and reflects the formal commitment that God has to creation, and, in turn, that human beings would have to their God, to one another, and

⁶¹Ibid. See Stefanovic's discussion of Revelation's pervading covenant motif (*Revelation*, 167-179, 195-211). Cf. Rev 21:1-8; 1:5-6; 5:1-11:19; Lev 26:11-12; Exod 29:45; 19:5; Jer 30:22; Ezek 37:27; 1 Pet 2:9-10.

⁶²David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Tyler: Dominion, 1987), xvii-xviii.

⁶³The idea of the covenant is one of the most profound biblical concepts. It uniquely expresses the deep communion, intimate relationship, and closest fellowship between God and human beings. It functions as one of the central themes of Scripture (Hasel, *The Promise*, 17). See Walter Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1961), 1:13-17; Steven L. McKenzie, *Covenant* (St. Louis, Chalice, 2000); Moore; Robertson.

⁶⁴LaRondelle, *Our Creator Redeemer*, 150.

⁶⁵Dumbrell, 78-118; LaRondelle, *Our Creator Redeemer*, 154.

⁶⁶Horton, 16.

⁶⁷Carol J. Dempsey, *Hope Amid the Ruins: The Ethics of Israel's Prophets* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2000), 19. Since the Creator of all reality is a person, all of that reality that God voluntarily produces exists in relationship. God not only shares a divine relationship to creation, but also enters into covenant with all creation—the natural world and human beings alike. Covenant establishes and reflects the formal commitment that God has to the creation and, in turn, that human beings would have to their God, to one another, and to the natural world. For the ancient biblical people "covenant was central to life; it sustained life, preserved it, and ensured its future." To be in covenant was to be interdependent. When the covenant was preserved, life flourished. When the covenant was broken, life suffered.

to the natural world.⁶⁸ Thus ethics and moral life are envisioned, and so with the eschatological covenant consummation and the conduct appropriate or inappropriate for the maintenance of covenant life (21:7-8, 27; 22:14-15).

As with Revelation's creation theme, the natural implication of the book's pervading covenant imagery for any discussion of the Sabbath is that, in the biblical scheme of things, the Sabbath is God's enduring covenant sign (Exod 31:12-17; Ezek 20:12, 20; Isa 56:6; cf. Mark 2:27).⁶⁹ Again, we ask frankly, why would it be any different in Revelation? If the biblical-covenantal worldview so dominates the book, wouldn't the Sabbath also be assumed and implied?

In the Hebrew Bible, from which Revelation unfolds its worldview, covenant, creation, and Sabbath are interrelated and inseparable. The original divine Sabbath represented the Creator's covenantal lordship over the world.⁷⁰ It was the sign of the creation covenant.⁷¹ In effect, "the history of the covenant was really established in the event of the seventh-day."⁷² It would seem that Revelation's biblical creation-and-covenant themes provide a perspective in which the corresponding seventh-day Sabbath is assumed and implied.

With respect to this study, the Sabbath in relation to the covenant is bound up with *relationality* and the question of fulfilled promises. As the conclusion of creation, the Sabbath declares both God's holy presence among his people and the sufficiency of his provision for the future.⁷³ Moral vision is likewise engendered. The sabbatical realization portrayed at the end of the book of Revelation asserts that the same covenant relationship that will exist between God and his people throughout redemptive history is already in place from the beginning of creation. These principles of *relationality*, provision, commitment, ethics, and fulfilled promises embodied in the Sabbath stand at the center of the covenant consummation by God at the re-creation of the world.⁷⁴

Sabbath and the Exodus

The exodus was a decisive moment in Israel's history.⁷⁵ Throughout Scripture, it is perceived as a "divine event" and "the powerful, compelling center of

⁶⁸Ibid., 19-34.

⁶⁹Gane, 311-332; Hafemann, 41-60; LaRondelle, *Our Creator Redeemer*, 7-9; MacCarty, 180-205.

⁷⁰Kline, 19, 39. See also Hafemann, 55.

⁷¹Hafemann, 50; LaRondelle, *Our Creator Redeemer*, 7.

⁷²Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958), 3/1:217.

⁷³Hafemann, 54. The Sabbath signifies a promise from God that he has provided and will provide everything that Adam and Eve need. There is nothing he will have to do that he has not already committed himself to do.

⁷⁴God is graciously and wonderfully present among his people. He has kept all of his promises and sufficiently meets the needs of his people for all eternity (21:1-22:5; cf. 7:15-17).

⁷⁵Eugene H. Merrill, "A Theology of the Pentateuch," in *A Biblical Theology of the Old*

Israel's defining memory of faith⁷⁶ (Exod 12:26-27; 13:8-10, 14-15; Deut 5:12-15; 6:20-24; 26:5-9). As one of Scripture's "most significant symbols of biblical faith,"⁷⁷ it is paradigmatic in that it provides the plot and structure of later, defining moments in the history of God's people.⁷⁸ Thus the exodus becomes a theological symbol throughout Scripture, serving as the literary backdrop for spiritual/moral imagination, formation, and decision.⁷⁹ It unfolds and nuances themes of deliverance, covenant, Sabbath, divine presence, holiness, sanctuary, worship and idolatry, judgment, law, election, and commission to service.⁸⁰

Of all the NT books, the Apocalypse uses the exodus motif most thoroughly in its unfolding theology and moral vision.⁸¹ The exodus symbolism in Revelation is both subtle and pervasive.⁸² Where the Apocalypse's OT allusions are drawn from Isaiah or the Psalms, the exodus forms the moral/spiritual backdrop for the respective imagery, further portraying Revelation's underlying exodus motif.⁸³

Testament, ed. Roy B. Zuck, Eugene Merrill, and Darrell Brock (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 31. The exodus was the key salvation event in which God liberated his people from oppression in Egypt, destroyed their oppressors, made them his own people, and led them to a better land. The exodus denotes not only Israel's physical deliverance from Egypt, but also includes the whole range of inseparably connected events and experiences of the people of God—deliverance from Egypt, from the armies of Egypt at the Red Sea, from the difficulties of desert life, and from enemies during forty years of wilderness wandering—including God's gracious provision along the way to the Promised Land. The exodus motif unfolds in each of the Pentateuchal books, including Genesis, which set its historical/theological/ethical contextual background. The theology of the book of Exodus in particular further shapes this permeating biblical theme.

⁷⁶Walter Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 53.

⁷⁷Stephen Hre Kio, "Exodus as a Symbol of Liberation in the Book of the Apocalypse" (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1985), 86.

⁷⁸Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 53, 55.

⁷⁹Kio, 79. At its core, Egypt stands as a symbol of oppression, suffering, bondage, sin, and the brokenness of our world. The exodus is seen as a story repeated in every soul (and generation) that seeks deliverance from the enmeshing and enervating influence of the world.

⁸⁰Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 65-66; Janzen, 25-26; Merrill, 30-56; Sailhamer, 241-322.

⁸¹Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 70.

⁸²See my more complete discussion, "Exodus and Apocalypse: Deliverance Then and Now," in *Christ, Salvation and the Eschaton: Essays in Honor of Hans K. LaRondelle*, ed. Jiří Moskala, Daniel Heinz, Peter van Bemmelen (Berrien Springs: Old Testament Department, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, 2009), 393-418.

⁸³Kio, 219, 222-223.

In the broadest sense, Revelation portrays the victorious saints as having participated in the “final exodus.”⁸⁴ Their song is “the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb” (15:3; cf. Exod 15:1-18). God’s victory in liberating his people and destroying their enemies stands in continuity with the ancient exodus. But it is also the Lamb’s song, a “new song” (Rev 14:3), for the triumph of the Lamb in his sacrificial death, resurrection, life, and coming judgment is the last great exodus, the ultimate salvation that was foreshadowed when the Israelites left Egypt in Moses’ day.⁸⁵ In keeping with this overarching deliverance narrative, there seems to be no end to the intersection and amalgamation of exodus submotifs within Revelation’s panorama.⁸⁶

As the fall in Genesis 3 began the tragic decreation of the completed perfect creation, the exodus symbolized the fulfillment of creation—itsself an act of new creation⁸⁷ or “the reclamation of creation.”⁸⁸ Within the exodus narrative, Sabbath and tabernacle imagery nuance and symbolize this “fulfillment of creation” motif (Exod 25–31 and 35-40, respectively). There is a sanctuary in both time and space, each the symbol and locus of God’s special presence.⁸⁹ In the final text of Exodus, the Lord’s holy presence in the tabernacle is so near and real that even Moses, who has often been privileged in approaching the Lord beyond the limits of others, cannot enter the tabernacle when the glory of the Lord fills it (Exod 40:35; cf. 19:20-25; 24:12-18; 33:7-11; 34:2-3, 28-35).

⁸⁴Easley, 269.

⁸⁵Johnson, 216.

⁸⁶In other words, I AM (1:4, 8, 17; 21:6; 22:12; 4:8; 11:17; 16:5; cf. Exod 3:14); the plagues and trumpets (15:1–16:21; 8:2–11:19; cf. Exod 7:14–12:34); wilderness difficulties and provision (12:6, 14; 17:3; cf. Exod 13:18; 15:22; 16:1; 19:1; Num 32:13; Deut 29:5); peals of thunder, lightning, hail, and sounds (4:5; 8:5; 11:19; 16:17-21; cf. Exod 19:16-19); the Passover (5:6; 1:5; cf. Exod 11:1–12:51); deliverance through blood (1:5; 5:9; 7:14; cf. Exod 11:1–12:51); kingdom and priests (1:6; 5:10; cf. Exod 19:4-6); the Lord as Creator of heaven and earth (14:7; cf. Exod 20:11; 31:17); mark or sign (13:16-17; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4; cf. Exod 13:9, 16); erasing or keeping names in God’s book (3:5; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; cf. Exod 32:32-33); covenant (1:6; 5:1–11:19; 21:3, 7; cf. Exod 2:24; 6:4-5; 19:5-6; 24:7-8; 31:16; 34:27-28); temple (11:1-2, 19; 16:17; 3:12; 7:15; 14:15, 17; 15:5-6; 8:3-4; 21:22; cf. Exod 25:8; 25–31; 35–40); and God dwelling among his people (21:3, 7; cf. Exod 25:8; 29:45-46; 40:34-38).

⁸⁷Dumbrell, 167-171; Hafemann, 77.

⁸⁸Terence E. Fretheim, “The Reclamation of Creation: Redemption and Law in Exodus,” *Interpretation*, 45/4 (1991): 354-365. “When God delivers Israel from bondage to Pharaoh, the people of Israel are reclaimed from the human situation intended in God’s creation. . . . God’s redemptive acts reclaim all that makes for life, including that which is truly human. Redemption is in the service of creation, a creation that God purposes for all” (ibid., 358-359).

⁸⁹See Janzen, 337, 368-370, 423-424.

In keeping with this larger plot and structure, Revelation, too, tells of true communion between God and his people, but pushes the imagery to include how, in the eschatological reclamation, God will reveal his face (22:4). The moral implications of such restored and intimate communion between God and his people are likewise paralleled.⁹⁰

Not surprisingly, and in conjunction with both creation and covenant themes, one finds the Sabbath factoring large in the exodus narrative. In particular, the Sabbath is articulated as the premier “sign command,” linking one’s worship, identity, and moral vision with God as Creator-Redeemer (Exod 31:12, 17; 20:8-11; 35:1-3; cf. 16:22-30).⁹¹ Strategically positioned in the heart of the covenant commands of the Decalogue, the Sabbath functioned theologically and ritually as *the focal* command, representing the whole covenant.⁹² As Adam and Eve’s ruptured relationship with God in Genesis 3 could be deemed a “fall from the Sabbath,” so also the exodus would both symbolize and bring about a return to the Sabbath and all that it meant in terms of God’s ultimate redemptive re-creation.⁹³ Thus the reestablishment of the Sabbath after the exodus parallels the first Sabbath after the sixth day of creation. The link is made explicit in the heart of the covenant commands:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy (Exod 20:8-11).

There would be a restoring of the same kind of relationship that existed between God and Adam and Eve in the garden.

In keeping with the exodus-envisioned re-creation experience, Deuteronomy’s version of the Sabbath commandment links the seventh-day Sabbath to the existential realities of deliverance:

Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant or your ox or your donkey or any of your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you, so that your male servant and your female servant may rest as

⁹⁰Lichtenwalter, “Exodus and Apocalypse.”

⁹¹MacPherson, 270. There are hints that the children of Israel found it hard to keep the Sabbath while in Egypt (Ps 105:34-35; cf. Exod 4:22-23; 5:1, 3, 5; Deut 5:12-15) and that Sabbath was at least part of the reason for the exodus (Exod 5:5; 16:22-30; Deut 5:14-15).

⁹²Ibid. By the postexilic period, the expression “to keep the Sabbath” appears to be an equivalent of “to keep the law.” See Bernard Gosse, “Sabbath, Identity and Universalism Go Together after the Return from Exile,” *JOT* 29/3 (2005): 362-363.

⁹³Dumbrell, 61-81.

well as you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to observe the Sabbath day (Deut 5:12-15).

With such compelling Sabbath imagery of the exodus in view, one cannot help but wonder how or where Revelation would treat such things in its use of the exodus. Again we ask, why would it be any different in Revelation? If the Sabbath looms so large in the biblical-exodus narrative, from which Revelation so thoroughly draws, wouldn't it be assumed and implied in Revelation itself?

Sabbath and the Exile

Israel's exile to Babylon is the tragic outworking of the exodus covenant promises and curses in the history of God's people (Deut 28–30; cf. Ezek 5:5-17). Within this covenant context, the Sabbath emerges as one of the underlying reasons for both the exile (2 Chron 36:21; Jer 17:21-27; Isa 56:2, 6; 58:13-14; Ezek 20:13, 16, 21, 24; 22:8, 26; Neh 9:1, 16) and the ongoing struggle for fidelity to God afterward (Neh 10:31; 13:15-22; Hos 2:11; Amos 8:5). The prophetic vision of release from Babylon gave promise of the freedom to keep the Sabbath in the worship of the Creator-Redeemer (Isa 66:23; Ezek 44:24; 46:1, 3-4, 12). The eschatological perspective of the coming new creation (and temple) heightened the Sabbath's prominence in the moral/spiritual imagination of a new and faithful generation (Isa 65:17-19; 66:22-23; Ezek 44:24; 45:17; 46:3).

While neither the pre-exilic fathers nor their children had respected the Sabbath (Ezek 20:12-32), there would be a new generation who would (Ezek 46:1, 3-4, 12; Isa 65:17-19; 66:22-23). Respect for the Sabbath would be seen as the difference between these generations and those who returned after the exile.⁹⁴ Respect for the Sabbath would also permit entrance into the house of the Lord, just as its profanation demands exclusion.⁹⁵ This new Sabbath-respecting generation is universalized in that both the eunuch and the foreigner would be included among the people of God (Isa 56:3-8; cf. 56:1-2). The opening-up of access to foreigners is permitted by the very special part played by the Sabbath. Thus Sabbath observance is a primary criterion by which membership would be defined.⁹⁶ The foreigners who join the community are the proselytes who keep the Sabbath. In effect, keeping the Sabbath plays an important part in the constitution and identity of the community during the exile and after the return.⁹⁷

In keeping with this focused identity formation, the Sabbath is linked concretely with acting in a socially responsible manner and is placed in the context of an emergent social vision of compassionate service, social justice,

⁹⁴Gosse, 367.

⁹⁵Ibid., 367, 369.

⁹⁶Ibid., 369.

⁹⁷Ibid., 359-363, 368.

and personal ethics (Isa 58:1–59:15).⁹⁸ The ethical vocabulary in relation to keeping the Sabbath is explicit: the Sabbath and *holiness* are linked.

Ezekiel further nuances the identity-shaping role of the Sabbath, with clear links between the Sabbath and one's relation to God. The Sabbath was the specific and symbolic *sign* (תּוֹטָה—the Greek equivalent is σήμειον) of the covenant relationship by which God sanctified (made holy) his people: “Also I gave them My Sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them. . . . Sanctify my Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the LORD your God” (Ezek 20:12, 20). The bridge between the vocabulary of the Sabbath and the vocabulary of the covenant is clear.⁹⁹ Other vocabulary bridges in Ezekiel 20 include links between (1) the Sabbath and a specific identifying *sign*, (2) the Sabbath and *holiness*, (3) the Sabbath and keeping the law (Ezek 20:11, 13, 16, 21, 24), and (4) idolatry and the profanation of the Sabbath (Ezek 20:16, 24, cf. vv. 27-32).

In the envisioned second coming into the promised land (see Ezek 20 and Isa 56:1-2), respect for the Sabbath must make the difference. So much so that “‘to keep the Sabbath’ appears to be an equivalent of ‘keep the law.’”¹⁰⁰ Sabbath is a concrete, observable sign that identifies one's relation to God and the gods (the idolatry of false worship)—whether or not one keeps the Sabbath. Ezekiel (along with Isaiah) follows the exodus paradigm of fall from the Sabbath to the return to the Sabbath in conceptualizing the eschatological new creation and its temple.

⁹⁸See *ibid.*, 359, 361; J. David Pleins, *The Social Visions of the Hebrew Bible: A Theological Introduction* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 263-270. The context of Isaiah 40–66 is the exile of Judah in Babylon and the period that immediately follows. It deals with the community of renewal and the triumph of hope over desolation. In Isaiah, the Sabbath is linked with acting in a socially responsible manner and it is placed in the context of an emergent social vision in Israel, where community renewal is the triumph of hope over desolations to come. That is why the reference to Sabbath-keeping (Isa 58:13-14) is sandwiched between graphic descriptions of both social and personal moral dysfunction and the call to an entirely different way of being in the world (Isa 58:1-12 and 59:1-10 forming an *inclusio*). An appeal to the Sabbath was especially appropriate in conjunction with exhortations for social justice, because Sabbath observance was to be a reminder of Israel's freedom from bondage and her responsibility to treat her own servants in a humane fashion (cf. Deut 5:12-15). See Robert B. Chisholm Jr., “A Theology of Isaiah,” in *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, Roy B. Zuck, Eugene Merrill, and Darrell Brock (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 336. The two versions of the Sabbath commandment cannot be divorced or played against each other, as both stress social implications and mentions fellow human beings. See Jan Milič Lochman, *Signposts of Freedom: The Ten Commandments and Christian Ethics* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1982), 62. That Sabbath-keeping involves compassionate ministry to others was clearly demonstrated in the life of Jesus (Matt 12:10-12; Mark 2:27; John 5:1-20; Luke 13:14-17; 4:16-21; cf. Isa 61:1-6).

⁹⁹Gosse, 363.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, 362.

Revelation's concept of end-time Babylon the Great (14:8; 16:19; 17:1-13; 18:1-24) is rooted in the role of ancient Babylon in the OT and the exile experience of God's people. The name "Babylon" is chosen intentionally to disclose the theological connection of type and antitype with Israel's archenemy.¹⁰¹ The historic fall of the Babylonian Empire, as predicted by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel, becomes the paradigm of the fall of end-time Babylon. The literary correspondence posits a typological connection between Israel's history and church history.¹⁰² When the connection between the *theological essentials* of both Babylons has been established, the Apocalypse provides the end-time application.¹⁰³ In effect, the moral/spiritual issues surrounding Israel's captivity by ancient Babylon, Babylon's sudden fall, followed by Israel's exodus from Babylon and her return to Zion to restore true worship in a new temple—which includes keeping the Sabbath—will be repeated in principle. God will call his people out of Babylon in the time of the end (Rev 18:4-5). This call is God's initiative to reestablish his remnant church and is part of his redemptive re-creation.

Given the unambiguous creation, covenant, and Sabbath context underlying Israel's exile to Babylon and envisioned second coming into the Promised Land, one would naturally look for these three themes to be evident somewhere in the *theological essentials* that Revelation applies to the crisis of the end. We have already seen how creation/redemptive re-creation and covenant are clearly so. Considering that Ezekiel provides the key theological/ethical backdrop of Revelation's captivity imagery and themes,¹⁰⁴ one would expect

¹⁰¹LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible*, 344.

¹⁰²Ibid., 264.

¹⁰³Ibid., 344. "The description of the collapse of end-time Babylon in Revelation is based on the fall of ancient Babylon. This is the sense in which the theological concept of end-time Babylon the great is to be understood in the book of Revelation" (Stefanovic, 447).

¹⁰⁴While John has more than one lead to follow and uses pregnant images and themes from other OT texts, it appears that the primary framework of Revelation's visions is provided by Ezekiel (even more so than Daniel or Exodus). See Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 87; Steve Moyise, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 74-83; Jean-Pierre Ruiz, *Ezekiel in the Apocalypse: The Transformation of Prophetic Language in Revelation 16, 17-19, 10* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989). Ezekiel appears to be the dominant influence on nearly twenty major sections of the Apocalypse (throne vision, Revelation 4, cf. Ezekiel 1; the scroll, Revelation 5, cf. Ezekiel 2-3; covenant curses, Rev 6:1-8, cf. Ezekiel 5; slain under the altar, Rev 6:9-11, cf. Ezekiel 6; coming wrath of God, Rev 6:12-7:1, cf. Ezekiel 7; sealing, Rev 7:2-8, cf. Ezekiel 9; scattering of coals, Rev 8:1-5, cf. Ezekiel 10; eating the scroll and no more delay, Revelation 10, cf. Ezekiel 2-3, 12; measuring the temple, Rev 11:1-2, cf. Ezekiel 40-41, 43; Jerusalem and Sodom, Rev 11:8, cf. Ezek 16:43-63; cup of wrath, Rev 14:6-12, Ezekiel 23; the Great Harlot, Rev 17:1-6, cf. Ezekiel 16 and 23; laments for Babylon, Rev 18:9-24, cf. Ezekiel 26-27; the birds' supper, Rev 19:17-21, cf. Ezekiel 39; Gog and Magog, Rev 20:7-10, cf. Ezekiel 38; the New Jerusalem/temple, Revelation 21-22; Ezekiel 40-48; the river of life, Rev 22:1f., cf. Ezekiel 47).

the Sabbath (as in Ezekiel 20) to be present also, especially in an identity-defining role.

The Sabbath in Revelation 14:7

At almost the literary center of the Apocalypse, an angel proclaiming the “eternal” gospel calls to all people on earth to recognize their Creator by worshiping him: “Fear God and give glory to him, because the hour of his judgment has come; worship him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of water” (14:7). The concentric structure of the book places this call squarely within the book’s theological center, which unfolds the central issues of the final crisis of earth’s history (11:19–15:4).¹⁰⁵ It unfolds a war between the dragon and the remnant people of God (12:17), a war that is fleshed out in more detail in Revelation 13–14. Worship is clearly the central issue (13:4, 8, 12, 15; 14:7, 9, 11; cf. 9:20; 19:10; 22:8-9). The explicit creation vocabulary at this decisive center-point reflects an overarching creation/covenant motif at play within the literary unit.¹⁰⁶ It is here, at the interpretive apex of Revelation’s chiasmic structure, that the book’s most explicit Sabbath language seems to appear.¹⁰⁷

Creation Motif

Revelation’s call to recognize the Creator by worshiping him reflects an overarching creation/reversal-of-creation motif at play within the unfolding narrative (11:19–15:4).¹⁰⁸ Subtle allusions to Genesis and the fourth-through-

While up to 130 Ezekiel allusions have been found in Revelation, it is the parallels between the substance of whole single units of the Apocalypse and often whole chapters of Ezekiel which makes Ezekiel the most important prophetic influence on the Apocalypse (M. D. Goulder, “The Apocalypse as an Annual Cycle of Prophecies,” *NTS* 27 (1981): 343, 348.

¹⁰⁵For discussion of Revelation’s chiasmic structure and 11:19–15:4 as both a literary unit and the book’s theological center, see Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 14-18; Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 131; William Shea and Ed Christian, “The Chiasmic Structure of Revelation 12:1–15:4: The Great Controversy Vision,” *AUSS* 38 (2000): 269-292; Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 175-176; J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 46-48; MacPherson, 271-275; Ekkehardt Müller, *Microstructural Analysis of Revelation 4–11* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1996), 573-589, 608; Jon Paulien, “Revisiting the Sabbath in the Book of Revelation,” *JATS* 9/1 (1998): 179-186; idem, *The Deep Things of God*, 122-123; Trafton, 10.

¹⁰⁶MacPherson, 280-283; William Shea, “The Controversy over the Commandments in the Central Vision of Revelation,” *JATS* 11/1-2 (2000): 227-229.

¹⁰⁷Paulien, “Revisiting the Sabbath in the Book of Revelation,” 183.

¹⁰⁸Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 284; MacPherson, 280-283; Shea, “The Controversy Over the Commandments,” 227-229.

the-seventh days of creation are evident.¹⁰⁹ There is the woman (12:1-2, 5; cf. Gen 3:1-6, 13-16), the serpent (12:3-4, 9; cf. Gen 3:1-6, 13-15), the seed of the woman (12:2, 4, 13; cf. Gen 3:15), the life-and-death conflict between the seed and the serpent (12:4, 7-9, 10-13; cf. Gen 3:15), the enmity between the serpent and the woman (12:4, 6, 13, 15, 17; cf. Gen 3:15). There are the heavens—day four of creation, and, in Revelation, the woman is clothed with the created lights of sun, moon, and stars into which the dragon intrudes (12:1, 3; cf. Gen 1:14-19). There is the sea—day five of creation, which brought forth great sea creatures producing after their own kind (Gen 1:20-23). Now a hybrid and destructive beast rises from the sea (13:1). There is the earth—day six of creation, which brought forth the beasts of the earth and human beings made in the image of God, who are given life by the breath of God and dominion over the earth (Gen 1:24-31). Now a lamb-like, yet demonic beast rises from the earth. An image is created into which life is breathed and life engendered. Dominion marks all with the beast's mark (13:11-17). There is rest—day seven of creation, during which God rests from all his work, forever linking the seventh day with his holy presence and blessing (Gen 2:1-4a). Now there is rest for the commandment-keeping saints who die in the Lord, while those who receive the mark of the beast have “no rest” (14:11, 13).

This creation backdrop highlights the essential nature of the dragon's attack on God and his people. It is decreation—the reversal of creation. The primal serpent disrupts God's original order (12:3, 9), thus challenging the Creator himself (12:3, 7-8; 13:6). His entrance into the earth turns the earthly realm from goodness to utter chaos (12:13; cf. 9:1-2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1-3, 7-9a). A “satanic trinity” exercises dominion over all the earth, bringing coercive deceit and illusion (13:12-17).¹¹⁰ They contest God's rule as Creator of heaven, earth, and sea.¹¹¹ Their goal is to place their name upon all the inhabitants of the earth. The mark of the beast signifies that all of creation is now under the beast (13:16-17; cf. 13:8).¹¹²

The opening of the heavenly sanctuary at both the beginning and throughout this literary unit (11:19; 15:5), together with the redeemed singing the song of Moses (15:2-4), unfold redemptive re-creation activity, which not only indicates the direction of the unit as a whole, but foreshadows the conclusion of the book of Revelation. This countering of the chaos-engendering reversal of creation is in keeping with the broad biblical theological pattern from which Revelation draws. The call to recognize the Creator by worshiping him (14:7) plays an integral role in this re-creation motif.

Covenant Motif

The forgoing creation/reversal-of-creation narrative is introduced with the most specific covenant language in the Apocalypse: “And the temple of God

¹⁰⁹MacPherson, 283.

¹¹⁰Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 284.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²MacPherson, 282.

which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of his covenant appeared in His temple” (11:19). This clear reference to the covenant (ἡ κιβωτὸς τῆς διαθήκης αὐτοῦ), located in the opened heavenly sanctuary, is an integral part of Revelation’s transition into the last portion of the book, which moves the reader’s vision toward the new creation. This explicit covenant imagery looks both forward and backward in that it encapsulates the heart of everything that has gone before in the vision of the sealed scroll, seven seals, and seven trumpets (4:1–11:18), and it signals what lies behind the issues that unfold ahead (12:1–22:21)—covenant realities.¹¹³ Most immediately, it sets the stage for the appearance of Revelation’s faithful *covenant community* (12:1-2, 5-6, 13-17; 13:7-8, 10; 14:1-5). They appear as the book’s first great sign in heaven: “a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was with child; and she cried out being in labor and in pain to give birth” (12:1-2). While Revelation 12 covers the whole of the covenant history of the Christian church,¹¹⁴ it begins with the church’s essential identity and continuity with the covenant people of the past. There is only one woman! There is only one dragon! Multiple attacks, yes, but one essential worldview and covenant identity in relation to the Creator-Redeemer. The remnant, against which the dragon vents his frustrated wrath, is the *covenant community* of the final crisis of earth’s history (12:17).

The explicit reference to the “ark of the covenant” highlight the *covenant commands*, i.e., Ten Commandments, which were located in the Ark of the Covenant (Exod 34:28; 26:15; Deut 4:13; 10:1-5; Heb 9:4).¹¹⁵ This allusion to the Decalogue is further nuanced with specific reference to these *covenant*

¹¹³Macpherson, 282, questions the duo-directionality of 11:19, asserting that it is more narrowly focused as the introduction for chaps. 12–15. However, the covenant and sanctuary motifs at play in the throne-room vision, such as the sealed scroll, seals, and trumpets (4:1–11:18), strongly suggest that 11:19 is duo-directional in perspective. See Rev 11:19 as both an introduction to 12:1-17 and a conclusion of 11:15-18 (Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 661).

¹¹⁴LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible*, 265.

¹¹⁵The reference to “flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm” is borrowed from language used to describe the celestial manifestations on Mount Sinai surrounding God’s writing of the Ten Commandments with his own finger (Exod 19:16-19). The covenant commandments of God are his specified way of life within the covenant between himself and humankind. It calls people to an ethical way of life, i.e., the wholeness and preservation of one’s relationship with God and with fellow human beings. That God’s covenant and its concrete commands are with humanity as a whole (and not just believers) is implied in the refusal to repent of violating the Decalogue’s concrete moral stipulations by those surviving the corrective judgments of the sixth trumpet (9:20-21), as well as the call to people of all nations, tribes, tongues, and peoples to “fear God and give Him glory” (14:7). If any analogy is intended between “the Ark of the Covenant” and the seven-sealed scroll of Rev 5:1, then the connotation could be that the sealed scroll has to do with a covenantal document consistent with the moral principles of the Ten Commandments (cf. 12:17; 14:12). Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 342; Stefanovic, 367-368.

commands in relation to the end-time *covenant community*: “So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep *the commandments of God* and hold to the testimony of Jesus” (12:17, emphasis supplied); and “Here is the patience of the saints who keep *the commandments of God* and their faith in Jesus” (14:12, emphasis supplied). Revelation is permeated with direct and indirect allusions to the Ten Commandments, affirming their enduring covenantal nature.¹¹⁶ In view of these many allusions, it would be hard to argue that the book’s explicit vocabulary, “the commandments of God” (12:17, 14:12), does not stand for both the Ten Commandments and the law’s characteristic call to obedience (Deut 6:1-2, 5-6; 11:1, 13-14, 22-24). The seventh-day Sabbath would naturally be included in this imagery of the *covenant commands* and the implied covenant faithfulness to those commands.

The prominence that the *covenant commands* play within this reversal of creation/re-creation vision is heightened by the conceptual frame that the heavenly sanctuary scenes of 11:19 and 15:5-8 form around chapters 12–14.¹¹⁷ The heavenly visions of 11:19 and 15:5 form an *inclusio*,¹¹⁸ which highlights the Decalogue as the particular set of commandments at issue in the unfolding conflict.¹¹⁹ This *inclusio* emphasizes the fact that the central dispute over creation/decreation and covenant faithfulness is related in particular to the Ten Commandments.¹²⁰ The implication is that the call to worship the Creator God involves at least one of the commandments, if not the

¹¹⁶References that allude specific commandments include the second, “worshiping idols” (9:20; cf. 21:8; 22:15); the third, “have not denied my name” (3:8; cf. 21:8), blasphemies against God” (13:6); the fourth, Lord’s day (1:10); the sixth, “murderers” and “liars” (21:8, 27; 22:18); the tenth, “fruit you long for” (18:14). See MacCarty, 199-200. That these *covenant commands* are for humanity as a whole (and not just believers) is implied in the refusal to repent of violating its concrete moral stipulations by those surviving the corrective judgments of the sixth trumpet (9:20-21). The commandments of God are his specified way of life within the covenant between himself and humankind. It calls people to an ethical way of life, i.e., the wholeness and preservation of one’s relationship with God and fellow human beings.

¹¹⁷“Both passages are set in the Most Holy Place, and both include manifestations of the glory of God that recall the giving of the law at Mount Sinai” (MacPherson, 273). Both refer to the heavenly sanctuary as being opened. Both imply the presence of the covenant commands of the Decalogue. The heavenly temple is referred to as “the dwelling of the testimony” because the law of God was located in the Most Holy Place of the OT tabernacle (Exod 30:26; 31:7; 32:15; 38:21; 40:21; Deut 10:5). See MacCarty, 201; Stefanovic, 479.

¹¹⁸While one could argue for chiasmic structure here, the simpler and more easily defined principle of *inclusio* is used, in which materials included between the brackets must be interpreted as influenced by the enclosing ideas.

¹¹⁹MacPherson, 275; Müller, 608-609.

¹²⁰Shea, 229. This is in keeping with the link between law and reclamation of creation in the exodus. See Fretheim, 362-363.

commandments as a whole. The interpretive import of this *inclusio* is that the call to worship the Creator is framed by references to the “commandments of God,” which, in turn, are framed by explicit *covenant commands* focused on sanctuary imagery.

11:19—Ark of the Covenant: Sanctuary Scene plus Covenant Commands

12:17—Keep the Commandments of God and Testimony of Jesus

14:7—Worship the Creator

14:12—Keep the Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus

15:5-8—Temple of the Tent of the Testimony: Sanctuary Scene plus Covenant Commands¹²¹

Sabbath Commandment

It is within this *covenant-commands* framework that explicit Sabbath language seems to emerge: “worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters” (14:7). Within the broader context of creation-reversal taking place within this narrative portion of Revelation (12–14), these words assert the Creator’s sole sovereignty in those creation realms in which the “satanic trinity” has intruded and brought chaos, i.e., heaven (12:3), earth (13:11), and sea (13:1).¹²² In the wider context, the words transport the reader back to the Genesis creation accounts. But given the immediate *covenant-commands* context, the verbal and thematic parallels with the fourth commandment are forceful. The words “made the heaven and the earth and sea” are fourth-commandment expressions (Exod 20:11),¹²³ suggesting strongly that Revelation has in view the seventh-day Sabbath.¹²⁴ The implication is that when Revelation describes heaven’s final appeal to the human race in the context of earth’s final crisis, “it does so in terms of a call to worship the Creator in the context of the fourth commandment.”¹²⁵ Again the interpretive import of the *inclusio* highlights the implications:

¹²¹Abridged and adapted from Shea, 217.

¹²²Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 284.

¹²³Exod 20:11 is not the only passage within which these words are found and in the same order. In Rev 10:6, the same words are used and in the same order, but with expansion (“who created heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it”), although the word κτίζω (“created”) is used rather than ποιέω (“made”). Ps 146:6 contains virtually identical language in the LXX. Thematic links to creation in each are obvious; however, the exodus and *covenant-commands* backdrop nuancing Rev 10:6, along with the creation-reversal, redemptive re-creation motif, points strongly to the Sabbath of creation, not just a general reference to the Creator as such. Cf. Paulien, “Revisiting the Sabbath in the Book of Revelation,” 183-184.

¹²⁴The UBS’s third edition of the scholarly Greek text indicates in the margin that these words are an allusion to Exod 20:11, the fourth commandment.

¹²⁵Paulien, “Revisiting the Sabbath in the Book of Revelation,” 185.

- 11:19—Ark of the Covenant: Sanctuary Scene plus Covenant Commands
 12:17—Keep the Commandments of God and Testimony of Jesus
 14:7—Worship the Creator in the context of the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment
 14:12—Keep the Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus
 15:5-8—Temple of the Tent of the Testimony: Sanctuary Scene plus Covenant Commands

The verbal and thematic parallels between Rev 14:7 and Exod 20:11 are both intentional and pregnant with implications regarding not only the Sabbath in particular, but in the enduring biblical triad of creation, covenant, and Sabbath in relation to the Creator-Redeemer and his envisioned redemptive re-creation. In effect, they underline the unique role that the Sabbath has consistently held both within the biblical scheme of things and, more specifically, within the *covenant commands*.

As the *inclusio* strongly suggests, while the *covenant community* is characterized as those who “keep the commandments of God (12:17, 14:12), the issue is not just any commandment of God. It is the seventh-day Sabbath in particular that is in view. This is in keeping with the creation/covenant worldview from which Revelation draws its understanding of moral/spiritual reality and the issues at play. More concretely, Revelation’s underlying exodus and Ezekiel themes further nuance the meaning of the language.¹²⁶ In both the books of Exodus and Ezekiel, the Sabbath is articulated as the premier “sign command” linking one’s worship, identity, and moral vision with God as Creator-Redeemer (Exod 31:12, 17; 20:8-11; 35:1-3; cf. 16:22-30; Ezek 20:12, 20).¹²⁷ Strategically positioned in the heart of the *covenant commands* of the Decalogue, the Sabbath functioned theologically and ritually as *the focal* command representing the whole covenant.¹²⁸ As there was a “fall from the Sabbath,” with its attending reversal of creation, there must be a “return to the Sabbath” and all that it means in terms of the worship of God and God’s ultimate redemptive re-creation.¹²⁹ “Keeping the Sabbath” and “keeping the commandments” were always synonymous.¹³⁰ In Scripture, the Sabbath has always been a concrete, observable sign, which identifies one’s relation to God and the gods (the idolatry of false worship). Not surprisingly, Revelation appears to display this consistent biblical pattern.

The *covenant commands*, so prominently placed in Revelation’s narrative, further suggest that the creation reversal therein includes rebellion against God’s covenant law. Within the narrative, the forces of chaos threatening to undo God’s creation subvert the very principles that promote and protect

¹²⁶Both of which are present in Revelation 12–14.

¹²⁷MacPherson, 270.

¹²⁸Ibid. See Gosse, 362-363. This reflects both the theological and ritual aspects of worldview as noted above.

¹²⁹Hafemann, 61-81.

¹³⁰Gosse, 362.

the life and well-being of the community.¹³¹ Their anticreational actions tear at right relationships with God, humanity, and all creation (cf. 9:21; 21:8, 27; 22:15; 11:18).¹³² They create their own culture and their own worldview (13:11-17; cf. 18:1-19). God's objective, then, in both the "everlasting gospel" (i.e., redemption, 14:6) and the *covenant commands* (14:7; cf. 14:12, 12:17) is the reclamation of creation. Thus the thrust of the narrative is as ethical as it is theological—and certainly not abstract in the least.

In this setting, heaven's call to worship becomes the focusing reality.¹³³ The matter of worship comes to a head with the demand to worship the beast (13:4, 8, 12, 15; cf. 14:9-11). Thus worship becomes the very heart of Revelation's solemn appeal. Do not worship the beast or his image (14:9-11); rather, worship the Creator (14:7).

Not surprisingly various facets of worship come into view: confession (who and how one worships), character (who one is, i.e., *being*), and conduct.¹³⁴ The anticreation forces demand that they be worshiped. They prescribe how that worship is to be (13:14-17). There is an ethic to go with that worship (9:20-21; 18:4-5; 21:8; 22:19). The narrative's parallels with Daniel 7 reveal how divine time and laws are changed and truth is flung to the ground (Dan 7:25; 8:9-14). These Danielic parallels reveal the essential continuity of experience among the covenant people of God throughout history with regard to the religious and moral issues evident as they face the question of ultimate loyalties.¹³⁵ The laws that the anticreational powers enforce become sign commandments and tests of loyalty and allegiance. This sign of loyalty is ritualized in a "mark" placed on the hand or forehead (13:16-17). In the end,

¹³¹For discussion on the link between redemption, law, and the reclamation of creation, see Walter Brueggemann, Bruce Birch, Terrence E. Fretheim, and David Peterson, *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 158; Dempsey, 29-30, 42-45; Fretheim, 357-360.

¹³²Within the immediate context, these anticreational actions include deceit (12:9; 13:14), accusation (12:10), persecution (12:13; 13:7), arrogant words (13:5), manipulating power (13:12-14), blasphemy against God and his name (13:6), the introduction of an idolatrous image (13:14-15), coercive economics (13:17), and murder (13:10, 15).

¹³³The idea of worship constantly emerges as a central theme of Revelation, esp. so in chaps. 12–14. There is no book of the NT in which worship figures so prominently, provides so much imagery, and is so fundamental to its purpose and message as the book of Revelation. The ultimate goal of Revelation's message is to inspire the worship of God (14:7; 19:10; 22:9). See Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1129; Marianne Meyers Thompson, "Worship in the Book of Revelation," *Ex Auditu* 8 (1992): 45.

¹³⁴Michael R. Weed, "Worship and Ethics: Confession, Character, and Conduct," *Christian Studies* 13 (1993): 47.

¹³⁵Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 680-730; LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible*, 291-320.

such worship forms character and determines conduct that further plunges the world into chaos (cf. 9:20-21; Ps 115:1-8).¹³⁶

Images of true worship are clear. It is the Holy Creator alone who is to be worshiped (14:7). Accordingly, the covenant community would reflect his character and way of being in the world (14:1-5). There is an ethic to go with it (12:17; 14:12), ritualized in the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath (14:7). This implies that, at its heart, the ritualizing element of the “mark” is “anti-Sabbath.”¹³⁷ The “mark of the beast” is a parody or substitution of the seventh-day Sabbath, the sign commandment of God’s covenant. It both imitates and seeks to replace the Sabbath. In such a contentious context (and the envisioned eschatological Babylon), God’s covenant community (and the envisioned find it hard to keep Sabbath. Such obedience will demand virtues of “keeping,” “perseverance,” and “faith” (12:17; 13:10; 14:12).¹³⁸ The seventh-day Sabbath will be a key reason for the second exodus—“Come out of her, My people” (18:4; 14:6-12).

At this point, the question is naturally asked, “Why the Sabbath?” Why not just any commandment? What does the Sabbath intend? What would the mark reverse?

The Sabbath as a biblical sign (Exod 31:12-17; Ezek 20:12, 20) and the mark as sign (13:16-17) reveals differences between the respective characters and the reign of God and of Satan. The Sabbath ultimately points beyond creation and any created entity to God himself—the holy Creator¹³⁹ and holy Redeemer (Isa 41:15; 47:4). As already noted above, the seventh-day Sabbath and holiness are linked. As such, the Sabbath plunges human beings into the midst of what comprises the nature of biblical holiness and what it means to be in covenant relationship with God and others. The seventh-day

¹³⁶Worship is a constitutive act. Worship and ethics are inescapably related. Confession, character, and conduct profoundly connect in worship, each impacting the others. We become what we worship. See G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2008); Miroslav Volf, “Worship as Adoration and Action: Reflections on a Christian Way of Being-in-the-World,” in *Worship: Adoration and Action*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 207; Weed, 47.

¹³⁷MacPherson, 278-280.

¹³⁸ὑπομονή (“patient endurance, steadfastness, perseverance”) is a key ethical term in the Apocalypse (1:9; 2:2-3, 19; 3:10; 13:10; 14:12). In this decisive worship context, it is defined together with τηρέω in terms of ethical requirements, as well as in terms of maintaining loyalty or allegiance to Jesus, i.e., “their faith in Jesus” (14:12). Worship is characterized by obedience to God in keeping his commandments (14:12; cf. 12:17). See Osborne, 543.

¹³⁹God’s holiness points to his uniqueness as Creator and to moral and ethical concerns of the Godhead. God’s holiness points to his nearness, as well as his distance to humanity, and is ultimately manifested for the purpose of saving sinful creatures. See Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, *Spanning the Abyss: How the Atonement Brings God and Humanity Together* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2008), 17-19.

Sabbath was formed and filled with the holy presence of God (Gen 2:1-4a). It is holy because God fills it with his holy presence. It is not just a day, but a holy Person that is in view. The Sabbath is about the very presence of God; it is about God's holiness in action,¹⁴⁰ and it implies the holiness of men and women.¹⁴¹ The seventh-day Sabbath has an irrefutable, implicit social dimension.¹⁴² It plays an important part in the constitution and identity of God's covenant community.¹⁴³ It is linked concretely with acting in a socially responsible manner and is placed in the context of an emergent social vision of compassionate service, social justice, and personal ethics (Isa 58:1-59:15).¹⁴⁴ The Sabbath serves as a hinge commandment, pointing in two directions (toward God and toward one's neighbor) and, at the same time, fundamentally linking them.¹⁴⁵

In contrast to the mark, which plunges one into the fallenness and apostasy that Revelation envisions (18:4-5), and the book's clear link between idolatry and moral chaos (cf. 9:20-21), the seventh-day Sabbath reminds

¹⁴⁰Moskala, 64.

¹⁴¹Jacques B. Doukhan, "Loving the Sabbath as a Christian: A Seventh-day Adventist Perspective," in *The Sabbath in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, Tara C. Akenasi, and William H. Shea (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 156.

¹⁴²Moskala, 64.

¹⁴³Gosse, 359-363, 368.

¹⁴⁴See *ibid.*, 359, 361; Pleins, 263-270. See Zuck, 336.

¹⁴⁵The principle of indivisible unity of the *covenant commands* is evinced in the Sabbath commandment. It is not insignificant that within the Decalogue, the Sabbath commandment's placement is the symbolic link between the divine-human relationship (Exod 20:4-11) and the human way of life, which is further addressed in the following six commands (Exod 20:12-17). The Sabbath command takes the most space of any of the ten in the two tablets. It is the only command that mentions both God and neighbor together. See Kathryn Greene-McCreight, "Restless Until We Rest in God: The Fourth Commandment as Test Case in Christian 'Plain Sense' Interpretation," in *The Ten Commandments: The Reciprocity of Faithfulness*, ed. William P. Brown (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 223; Lochman, 67; Susan Niditch, *Ancient Israelite Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 73. The indivisible unity of the covenant commands is likewise illustrated in the imagery of the sixth trumpet, which links the cults of paganism ("idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood") with murders, sorceries, immorality, and thefts as an expression of the rebellion of humankind against the rule of God the Creator (9:20-21). False worship and immorality are closely linked. V. 20 focuses on sins directed against God (the first four of the Ten Commandments, Exod 20:1-11). V. 21 directs our attention to sins directed against other human beings (the last six of the Ten Commandments, Exod 20:12-17). When human beings worship images (idols), they demonstrate disrespect for the true image of God—their fellow human beings (Gen 1:26-27). No matter one's interpretation of the sixth seal, the bottom-line issue is the matter of worship and ethics. The stark note of moral reality coming at the close of grotesque symbolic imagery further highlights the tangible realities of worship as ethical practice and conduct.

human beings of the “creation power” in divine holiness.¹⁴⁶ Those who observe the Sabbath participate in God’s holiness; through divine grace and the Holy Spirit’s empowerment, they are strengthened and transformed so that they can bring God’s holy presence into real life and perform creative moral/spiritual work as new creatures in Christ (Heb 6:4-5; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 5:16-24; Eph 3:16). Such is implied in the vision of the 144,000, who have the Lamb and the Father’s name in their foreheads and whose moral lives are blameless (14:1-5).¹⁴⁷ They both think and act like their holy Creator (1 Cor 2:10-16; Phil 2:5). Through divine grace, they experience, express, and proclaim the present hope of redemptive re-creation, which God alone can bring in the midst of Revelation’s formidable and encapsulating creation-reversing realities.¹⁴⁸

The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day in Revelation 1:10

There is little doubt that Revelation’s initial vision of the risen Christ, which 1:10 introduces, is fundamental to the rest of the book.¹⁴⁹ In keeping with the book’s narrative character, it is a focusing vision that unfolds themes and prepares one for understanding what lies ahead. Working from the presupposition that the book of Revelation is a literary and thematic unity, the significance of the phrase ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ (“the Lord’s Day”) in Rev 1:10 must be viewed from its context in the whole book,¹⁵⁰ as well as its serving as a marker, which alerts the thoughtful reader to critical issues to come.¹⁵¹

In its immediate setting, the verse completes the description of 1:9, in which John tells the story of why he was at Patmos and how he shares his reader’s situation of faithful witness under trial. Evidently, it was important for John to make three basic statements before he described his first vision. He defines the specific place where he received the heavenly visions (“I . . . was on the island called Patmos). He gives the reason for his stay on the island of Patmos (“because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus”). Finally, he establishes a temporal connection by defining a specific day when he heard the loud voice behind him (“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day”). The vast

¹⁴⁶Moskala, 65.

¹⁴⁷The juxtaposition of the 144,000 and the call to worship the Creator in the context of the fourth commandment—within the covenant commands *inclusio* (12:17 and 14:12)—imply their relationship.

¹⁴⁸Revelation does not envision perfectionism, but rather transformation of life and thought—conversion—through the “eternal gospel” (12:11; 14:7). See Larry L. Lichtenwalter, “Worldview Transformation and Mission: Narrative, Theology, and Ritual in John’s Apocalypse,” *JATS* 21/1-2 (2010): 211-244.

¹⁴⁹Richard J. Bauckham, “The Lord’s Day,” in *From Sabbath to the Lord’s Day: A Biblical, Historical and Theological Investigation*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 241. Barr, 37.

¹⁵⁰Bauckham, “The Lord’s Day,” 240.

¹⁵¹Frey, “The Theological Concept of the Sabbath in the Book of Revelation,” 238.

majority of commentaries interpret the phrase “the Lord’s day” as a reference to Sunday, the day when the churches met for corporate worship and on the same day would read the book of Revelation.¹⁵² In so doing, they tacitly affirm the essential historical and temporal nature of both the text and the day referred to, i.e., the vision took place on a specific day. “The Lord’s day” was the day on which John’s first vision took place. While part of the narrative, it is not part of the vision itself.¹⁵³

The Greek phrase ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ is unique in its form and its meaning is debated. Among the options considered—the eschatological day of the Lord, Easter Sunday, the Emperor’s Day, Sunday, or the biblical Sabbath—Sunday is usually selected for two reasons: because of (1) the temporal implications of the text itself; and (2) the external witness of emergent Christian tradition, which ultimately would link ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ with the first day of the week.¹⁵⁴

Naturally, the question arises, though: Does one work backward (and thus externally) from developments in Christian history to the text and its meaning—assuming such emerging tradition is faith-positive and in no way evidences creation-reversal compromise and/or apostasy already at work within the church or history?¹⁵⁵ Or does one work forward (and internally)

¹⁵²For examples and discussion, see Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, 84; Bauckham, “The Lord’s Day,” 240-246; A. T. Lincoln, “From Sabbath to the Lord’s Day: A Biblical and Theological Perspective,” in *From Sabbath to the Lord’s Day: A Biblical, Historical and Theological Investigation*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 382-384; Osborne, 83-84; Smalley, 51; Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1–7*, ed. Kenneth Barker (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), 91.

¹⁵³Discussions suggesting that John’s being “in the Spirit on the Lord’s day” was essentially an ecstatic visionary phenomenon in keeping with similar “in the Spirit” experiences later in the book (4:2; 17:3; 21:10) miss the subtle difference between the passages in question. There is a fundamental temporal/spatial difference between John’s first vision experience and the following three. John received the vision *on* the Lord’s day rather than being *brought into* or *taken to* the Lord’s day. In each of the following occurrences, John was transported elsewhere; i.e., into the throne room, into the wilderness, or onto a high mountain. Given the narrative character of the introductory information preceding John’s first vision one can conclude these subsequent “in the Spirit” experiences likewise took place on the same Lord’s day.

¹⁵⁴Bauckham, “The Lord’s Day,” 221-250. Lincoln, 383-384, asserts that “the Lord’s Day is the designation for Sunday rather than the eschatological day of the Lord, Easter, or the Sabbath, Bauckham has convincingly argued.” Given the unambiguous evidence from the second half of the second century, it “is highly unlikely that John writing to the churches of the province of Asia at the end of the first century would use κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ (‘the Lord’s day’) to mean some different day.” Thus “Rev 1:10 provides evidence from the NT that by this time, at least in the churches in Asia Minor, the first day of the week had become regularly observed in the Christian church and was distinctive enough to be graced with the title of the Lord’s Day.”

¹⁵⁵Both Bauckham and Lincoln build their case for Sunday as the Lord’s day primarily from second-century usage, working backward and externally to the text,

from the text within the book of Revelation itself in order to discover its contextual, intertextual, and theological origins, and only afterward move outwardly to emerging traditions in Christian history in order to discover the text's meaning in relation to those traditions?

Following the latter methodology plunges one immediately into the compelling creation/covenant/Sabbath drama unfolding within the larger narrative—suggesting that it is within this context that “the Lord’s day” must be understood. Even so, one must begin with the immediate context and vision to observe if similar themes are indeed present.

The creation/re-creation covenant motifs within John’s first vision are subtle but nevertheless evident, such as the “Tree of Life” (2:7); “the paradise of God” (2:7); numerous exodus images (1:10; 3:14, 17); images of pre-exilic idolatry (2:20); and explicit eschatological sanctuary imagery (2:12-16; 3:1, 12). Four designations of Christ in particular highlight the underlying creation/covenant motifs: “the faithful and true witness” (3:14), the “Beginning of the creation of God” (3:14), “the first and the last” (1:17; 2:8), and “the living one” (1:17). As holy Creator, Jesus is the First—he is also the Last (cf. 21:5-6; 22:13; 1:8). He is the Omega-Consummator, who not only initiates creation, but also consummates it in redemptive re-creation (2:7; 3:12, 21; 21:1–22:5; cf. 5:6-10, 13). Jesus is likewise faithful to his creation (the seven hurting churches of Asia Minor, his people along the way, and the world at its close). As an allusion to the Sinai covenant and the loud trumpet sound when God spoke the ten *covenant commands* (Exod 19:16, 19), the description of a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet places the entire book of Revelation into a covenant context (1:10).¹⁵⁶

Surprisingly, John’s self-identity as a “fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus” (1:9) not only connects with the creation-reversing realities already experienced by the seven churches in the first century, but thrusts the reader forward thematically into the deeper anticreational conflict that lay on the horizon for both the churches and the *eschaton* (12–14). The word “perseverance” (ὑπομονή) links one thematically

assuming that such usage reflects positive traditions emerging within the Christian community rather than any consideration of possible compromise or apostasy already at work within the church by that time. Christian tradition thus determines their exegesis and ensuing theology. For Bauckham, as a technical term, the meaning of “the Lord’s day” must be the same as that of the phrase used in the second-century Christian literature. Sabbath or the eschatological day of the Lord are thus discounted (Bauckham, “The Lord’s Day,” 227). He asserts that, given second-century usage, the very title makes it clear that the Lord’s day was the regular and most significant day on which John’s churches gathered for worship (*ibid.*, 245). John “receives his visions on the day when the churches meet for corporate worship and on the same day his prophecy will be read aloud (1:3) in the church meeting” (*ibid.*, 240-241). Little or no attention is given to the Sabbath as an option, i.e., either to the unambiguous allusion to the fourth commandment in 14:7 or to other Sabbath-oriented nuances within the text of Revelation as a whole (e.g., language, structure, chiasms, themes).

¹⁵⁶Frey, “The Theological Concept of the Sabbath in the Book of Revelation,” 232.

to the future call to perseverance in keeping the *covenant commands* (14:12; 12:17; cf. 13:10). The word “kingdom” (βασιλεία) encompasses the creation/covenant/Sabbath realities of God’s sovereign rule over the world and his control of its history.¹⁵⁷ It also connects thematically and personally with the true Lord of “the Lord’s day” (1:10). There is the Lord’s sovereign reign—both rule and realm (1:5; 5:11-13). There is the vision of the Lord’s consummation of that reign and the ultimate possession of the world (11:15). There is the Lord himself—“Lord of lords and King of kings” (17:14; cf. 19:16). There on the horizon are the Kingdom city and the Kingdom people (2:7; 3:12; 20:9; 21:1–22:5; 19:7-9). Finally, and purposefully prominent in this inaugural narrative vision, there is *the day* that celebrates and symbolizes that the Creator alone is Lord.¹⁵⁸ This can be none other than the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment!¹⁵⁹

The interpretation of “the Lord’s day” as the seventh-day Sabbath is put forth not only by the creation/covenant themes within this opening vision and larger context of the book of Revelation, but also by the larger biblical witness. The OT designates the seventh-day Sabbath as “my holy day,” “the holy day of the Lord,” “the Sabbath of the Lord” (Isa 58:13; cf. Exod 16:23; 20:10). The expression “the Lord’s day” sounds similar to Jesus’ words in all three of the Synoptic Gospels—“The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath” (Matt 12:8; Mark 2:27-28; Luke 6:5).¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷For a discussion of the book of Genesis as kingdom prologue in relation to Revelation’s final consummation and the foundations of God’s covenantally administered kingdom in relation to both creation and the Sabbath, see Kline, 34-38, 42-61, 215.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., 81.

¹⁵⁹While Baukham also argues that the issue of divine sovereignty is a central theme of the Apocalypse, he builds the case for the lordship of Jesus Christ on both his faithful witness until death and the vindication of that witness in the resurrection. Thus John associates the choice of this day with Jesus’ resurrection on the first day of the week (“The Lord’s Day,” 241-244). In doing so, he forgets that both within the biblical witness as a whole and the Apocalypse in particular, the hope of resurrection is dependent on the creative possibilities of the covenant Creator (idem, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 48, 51). Creation precedes resurrection, and resurrection is an act of redemptive re-creation. It is the seventh-day Sabbath that points to the creation power evident in the resurrection of Christ and holds out the promise of final resurrection in the end (20:4-5, 13; cf. 2:8; 1:17). In this light, focus on Sunday would essentially undermine the larger vision of Christ as Creator-Redeemer in light of the final consummation. Linking resurrection to Sunday dismisses the continuity of God’s acts and purposes in history. The resurrection of Christ does not stand out in isolation or independence from creation.

¹⁶⁰Frey, “The Theological Concept of the Sabbath in the Book of Revelation,” 230. The NT consistently refers to Sunday as the “first day of the week” (Matt 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2). The Gospel of John, which is dated later than the book of Revelation, likewise refers to Sunday as “the first day of the week.” It would be inconsistent if “the Lord’s day” meant Sunday in the Apocalypse.

The reference, then, to the Lord's day is clearly intentional, serving as a marker that alerts the thoughtful reader to critical issues to come.¹⁶¹ Symbolic to some degree, its real meaning unfolds within the book. It is probable that John purposefully used this terminology in light of developments, which the Spirit enabled him to see already happening in the church. If indeed "the Lord's day" points to the seventh-day Sabbath against growing pressures developing toward abandonment of the Sabbath for the first day of the week, it would highlight the crucial issues through history, especially in regard to the end-time. Is it possible that if the language of the Lord's day was already beginning by John's day among a compromising element within the church, that he purposefully put a biblical twist to the terminology in order to firmly anchor the truth of the seventh-day Sabbath in both history and the *eschaton*? Or is it possible that the second-century usage of the terminology reflects a twist put on it by an already compromising element within the church?

Sabbath Language

Sabbath language can be identified in Revelation's frequent use of the number seven, as well as by the word "rest." The number seven has had symbolic value from the most remote times.¹⁶² The number seven occurs eighty-eight times in the NT, fifty-six of which are in the Apocalypse. There are seven menorahs, seven stars, seven seals, seven spirits, seven angels, seven plagues, seven horns, and seven mountains. There are seven churches, seven blessings, seven sanctuary introductory scenes, and seven promises of Christ's coming. In its very structure, Revelation is molded around the number seven.¹⁶³ Seven is the biblical number of completeness and fullness.

The biblical link between the number seven and the seventh-day Sabbath is clear (Exod 20:8-11). The Genesis creation narrative presents God as "the Sabbatarian Creator" and "a Sabbatarian Consummator" (Gen 2:1-4a; cf. Mark 2:27; Rev 21:1-8).¹⁶⁴ The number seven is woven into the creation account, symbolizing completeness and fullness of God's good creation. Accordingly, human life was to have a sabbatical structure.¹⁶⁵ The frequent use of the number seven as the number of completeness and fullness implies that the seventh-day Sabbath was paradigmatically used as a theological concept for the entire book of Revelation. The number seven nuances the creation/covenant motifs found within the book.

Likewise, Revelation's concept of "rest" further suggests that the seventh-day Sabbath rest and Sabbath consummation are underlying themes of the

¹⁶¹Ibid., 238.

¹⁶²Doukhan, *Secrets of Revelation*, 27.

¹⁶³Ibid.

¹⁶⁴Kline, 33, 40, 78.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., 78.

book.¹⁶⁶ The verb ἀναπαύω (6:11; 14:13—“to give relief, refresh, rest, relax”) and the noun ἀνάπαυσις (4:8; 14:11—“relief, rest, resting-place, ceasing, stopping”) are each used twice. These words “are commonly employed in the LXX to translate the Hebrew *shabat*.”¹⁶⁷ While no theological implications seem to be at play in 4:8, the other three places are of interest.¹⁶⁸ On one hand, the death of God’s faithful people is described as resting “for a little while” or resting “from their labors; for their works follow them” (6:11; 13). On the other hand, those who have rejected and resisted the gospel “do not have rest day and night” (14:11). Given the creation/decreation covenant commands and the specific fourth-commandment, seventh-day Sabbath imagery already at play in chapters 12–14, the juxtaposition created in 14:11-13 between the horrendous fate of worshipers of the beast and its image who “have no rest, day or night” and the blessed dead in the Lord who “rest from their labors,” the presence of intentional Sabbath-language becomes unmistakable.¹⁶⁹

The threat that the worshipers of the beast and his image will never rest echoes the declaration made to rebellious Israel regarding its rest in the Promised Land: “Therefore I swore in My anger, Truly they shall not enter into My rest” (Ps 95:11). This is instructive. The epistle to the Hebrews picks up this theme of rest/no rest with soteriological and eschatological purpose in relation to the seventh-day Sabbath (Heb 4:3-6), where it asserts: “So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience” (Heb 4:9-11).¹⁷⁰ Here the ultimate or antitypical rest in Christ awaits the believer at the end of time. It is a rest compared to the Sabbath rest of God in Gen 2:2 (cf. Heb 4:3-6). It is a rest that the Canaan rest pointed toward (Heb 4:8-10). The Sabbath rest initiated by God on the seventh-day of creation is the archetype of what rest is all about. There are strong implications in the text that both the writer and the reader were keeping the seventh-day Sabbath and that they could think of heaven as one extended Sabbath rest.¹⁷¹

Parallel soteriological and eschatological purpose of the use of rest in relation to the seventh-day Sabbath is found in Revelation. In Revelation, the

¹⁶⁶Frey, “The Theological Concept of the Sabbath in the Book of Revelation,” 235.

¹⁶⁷Robert M. Johnston, “The Eschatological Sabbath in John’s Apocalypse,” *AUSS* 25/1 (1987): 46.

¹⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁶⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰David A. deSilva, “Entering God’s Rest: Eschatology and the Socio-Rhetorical Strategy of Hebrews,” *Trinity Journal* 21/1 (2000): 25-40; Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary*, ed. C. Clifton Black (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 122-130; George R. Knight, *Exploring Hebrews: A Devotional Commentary* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2003), 72-76.

¹⁷¹Knight, 75-76.

final attainment of rest by the people of God will be a participation in God's seventh-day of creation—his everlasting Sabbath—to be revealed upon the re-creation of heaven and earth with the subsequent enthronement of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb (21:5, 22f.; 22:1-3).¹⁷² Sabbatical eternity is an underlying theme in the book.¹⁷³

Summary and Conclusion

This study shows how the seventh-day Sabbath is both a tacit concern and an underlying theological concept with regard to Revelation's worldview of covenant in relation to creation and redemptive re-creation. It demonstrates how Revelation places the Sabbath in the context of the entire biblical message and addresses the theological and historical issues of the Sabbath with respect to the fundamental end-time crisis of humanity in relation to the covenant Creator. The biblical triad of creation, covenant, and Sabbath in relation to the Creator-Redeemer and his envisioned redemptive re-creation is an enduring one. The triad posits continuity in history and reflects a biblical historicism that posits enduring themes within the creation/creation-reversal conflict throughout history. It reveals how redemption, in effect, is in the service of creation.¹⁷⁴ It also makes evident that the theology of the Sabbath is inextricably linked with the theology of the Sabbath within the larger biblical canon. Any discussion of the Sabbath in the book must take place against that broader conceptual canvas.

A covenant/creation bridge exists between the OT (Genesis) and the NT (Revelation) in that Revelation not only parallels Genesis, but also fulfills, completes, and perfects God's creation into redemptive re-creation and the Sabbath in the eternal rest of God. The parallels between the two books include the issues and events of the last things on earth, including creation and the restoration of creation as an eschatological reality. These issues touch on human moral orientation and behavior in relation to the Holy Creator and have a constitutive impact both for the individual and the community. The Sabbath provides both a tangible and symbolic connecting link with these fundamental theological and ethical realities.

Given the narrative, ritual, and theological roles that the Sabbath plays within Revelation's worldview in terms of conveying prophetic-theological-ethical truth regarding creation and covenant, is it merely a metaphor? In the end, do we really need to "keep the Sabbath"?¹⁷⁵ The answer is Yes! Why? Because the Sabbath is one of the *covenant commands* that Revelation asserts the saints will, literally, *keep* (12:17; 14:12). In keeping the Sabbath, one participates in an observable sign that both shapes one's self-identity and demonstrates

¹⁷²Kline, 37.

¹⁷³Johnston, 50.

¹⁷⁴Fretheim, 359.

¹⁷⁵The question is an important one. Hafemann, 221, who outlines so eloquently how the fundamental issue of redemptive re-creation is a return to Sabbath, essentially abandons it as a reality for the believer in Christ.

one's relation to God, who alone is holy (14:1, 7; Exod 31:12-17; Ezek 20:12, 20). The Sabbath is not just an idea, but also a temporal reality—a real day rooted in creation past from which theological and moral meaning is drawn (1:10, Gen 2:1-4a; Exod 20:8-11). Scripture affirms that the renewed creation will worship the Creator from one Sabbath to another (21:5; cf. Isa 66:22-23). Both the weekly and the eschatological Sabbath stand side by side in John's own experience and within his vision of the conflict of the ages and the sabbatical consummation. The vision of the Sabbath consummation affirms weekly rest.

Having shown that the Sabbath is present as a tacit concern and underlying theological theme in Revelation, it still remains that the word "Sabbath" is never mentioned in the book. Thus the question remains: Why would it not be so clearly named? What is there about the Sabbath in Revelation that one does not even need to make it clear, let alone mention it? What theological reason would there be for it? Does absence of the word "Sabbath" in the book of Revelation speak compellingly for its presence? When we scrutinize the text for traces of the Sabbath, are we doing what the author made us do? What God wants us to do? Does Revelation use the perceived absence of the Sabbath as a way to bring us more deeply into the heart of the cosmic conflict? Would one's search for the Sabbath in the book serve to bring them into deeper relationship with the Creator himself?

It is evident that Sabbath fingerprints are on nearly every page of Revelation. Perhaps that is enough. Perhaps the very ambiguity has something to do with the meaning of the words "here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus" (14:12). It is likely that John's first readers would have still been keeping the seventh-day Sabbath.¹⁷⁶ Yet powerful forces may have already been at play to undermine such keeping and confuse the real issues. That is why, in the end, the question of the Sabbath is never about the Sabbath itself. It is about the Lord of the Sabbath. It is about our holy Creator—a Sabbatarian Creator, a Sabbath-giving Creator, and the Sabbatarian Consummation Creator.

¹⁷⁶Massyngberde Ford, 384.

THE SABBATH AS METAPHOR IN THE SECOND CENTURY C.E.

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Already in the Second Temple Period the Sabbath became a fruitful subject of spiritualization and metaphorization, a tendency that took several directions.¹

One important direction was eschatological. Psalm 90:4 (“For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past”) was useful for solving various problems, such as how Adam could live 930 years when God had said in the day that he ate the forbidden fruit he would die.² This device was easily applied to the creation week of Gen 1:1–2:3.³ One common schema that resulted was the notion of the Cosmic Week, according to which history would last six thousand years and then be followed by a millennium during which the earth will rest.⁴ Another variation was six thousand years, followed by a seventh, followed by eternity, corresponding to the septennate, followed by Jubilee. This schema led easily to the idea of a timeless, never-ending Sabbath at the end of time, inspired by Zech 14:6-7 (“On that day . . . there shall be continuous day—it is known to the Lord—not day and not night, for at evening time there shall be light”; cf. Rev 22:5).⁵

Perhaps related yet different from this eschatological Sabbath is Philo’s idea of a transcendental Sabbath, according to which God in Heaven keeps Sabbath all the time:

God alone in the true sense keeps festival. . . . And therefore Moses often in his laws calls the sabbath, which means “rest [ἀνάπαυσις],” God’s sabbath (Exod. xx.10, etc.), not man’s, and thus he lays his finger on an essential fact in the nature of things. For in all truth there is but one thing in the universe which rests [ἀναπαύμενον], that is God. But Moses does not give the name

¹Robert M. Johnston, “The Eschatological Sabbath in John’s Apocalypse: A Reconsideration,” *AUSS* 25 (1987): 39-50.

²*Jub.* 4:30.

³See Jean Daniélou, “La typologie millénariste de la semaine dans le christianisme primitif,” *VC* 3 (1948): 2.

⁴Some early sources that use or assume some variation of this idea are *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, *Testament of Dan*, *Apocalypse of Moses*, *Life of Adam and Eve*, Papias, and Pseudo-Barnabas (for discussion, see Johnston, 43). In Rabbinic circles the *locus classicus* is *b. Sanh.* 97a-b.

⁵Thus it is in *2 En.* 33:1-2 and *m. Tamid* 7:4, as well as various midrashim on the superscription of Psalm 92. *Mek.* Shabbata 1 on Exod 31:13 speaks of “the World to Come, which is characterized by the kind of holiness possessed by the Sabbath of this world. We thus learn that the Sabbath possesses a holiness like that of the World to Come.”

of rest to mere inactivity. . . . God's rest is rather a working with absolute ease, without toil and without suffering. . . . But a being that is free from weakness, even though he be making all things, will cease not to all eternity to be at rest [ἀναπαυόμενοι], and thus rest [ἀνάπαυσις] belongs in the fullest sense to God and to Him alone.⁶

It will be of interest that Philo uses the word ἀναπαύω, not the καταπαύω of Gen 2:2-3 and Exod 20:11 (LXX).

These conceptions of the eschatological Sabbath and the transcendental Sabbath originated in Jewish thought, and they clearly were not felt to nullify or replace the keeping of the literal seventh day of the week. Philo, for example, not to mention the Mishnah, had much to say about the literal Sabbath and its observance. Early Christians picked up and carried on these interpretations, but they soon began to use them as a rationale for abandoning the literal seventh-day Sabbath. The earliest unequivocal example of this is the vigorously anti-Jewish tract that we call Pseudo-Barnabas, or the Epistle of Barnabas, apparently to be dated near the end of the reign of Hadrian, soon after the end of the Bar Kochba rebellion.⁷ *Barnabas* 15 makes three points about the Sabbath. First, that God's creating in six days and resting on the seventh day means "that in six thousand years the Lord will bring everything to an end, for with him a day signifies a thousand years," and when Christ comes again in judgment, he will change the heavenly luminaries, and "then he will truly rest on the seventh day" (vv. 4-5). Second, flawed human beings at the present time cannot keep the Sabbath holy because they are not holy; but in the eschaton they will be able to do so:

Accordingly then we will truly rest [καταπαύω] and sanctify it only when we ourselves will be able to do so, after being justified and receiving the promise; when lawlessness no longer exists, and all things have been made new by the Lord, then we will be able to sanctify it, because we ourselves will have been sanctified first (vv. 6-7).

Third, in place of the seventh day Christians celebrate the eighth day (Sunday).⁸

The eschatological Sabbath and the transcendental Sabbath were ideas first generated in Jewish thought but taken up by Christians, usually in a way that was destructive of literal Sabbath-keeping. The third metaphorization of the Sabbath, which I will call the existential Sabbath, is one that I have not

⁶Philo, *Cher.* 86-90, trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929), 2:61-63.

⁷*Barn.* 16:3-4 is believed to refer to the building of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus on the Temple Mount in what was now to be Colonia Aelia Capitolina, beginning in 135 C.E.

⁸*Barn.* 15:8-9.

been able to trace to Jewish roots.⁹ It seems to have originated in Christian circles.

Matthew 11:25-30 is a Synoptic logion¹⁰ so uniquely Johannine in tone and flavor that it could be parachuted into the Fourth Gospel without causing the least disturbance.¹¹ R. McL. Wilson called the saying “a Johannine thunderbolt in the Synoptic sky.”¹² The second part of the logion is one of the most often quoted passages in the NT: “Come unto me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest [ἀναπαύσω ὑμᾶς]. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest [ἀνάπαυσιν] for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matt 11:28-30).¹³

Unfortunately, an artificial chapter division obscures the fact that these words form the prelude to the Sabbath controversies in the next chapter (Matt 12:1-14), where Jesus defends the lawfulness of his liberal use of the Sabbath day. Human need, he says, may legitimately be succored on the holy day, for “it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath” (Matt 12:12). As in Mark, Matthew’s Jesus claims to be the final authority on the subject of Sabbath-keeping: “for the son of man is lord of the Sabbath” (Matt 12:8).¹⁴ It appears

⁹At least I could not find it in Tannaitic sources or earlier. In later centuries, something like it in the form of odes to the Sabbath rest seeps into Jewish liturgical language.

¹⁰Evidently from Q; the first part is closely paralleled in Luke 10:21-22.

¹¹Besides the content of the logion itself, even the form is reminiscent of the Fourth Gospel. The use of ἀποκρίνεσθαι in this location to introduce this saying is somewhat unexpected, though not quite unique. One would expect this word to introduce a formal reply to a charge or a challenge (as in John 5:17), but here no one has said anything for Jesus to reply to, for Matt 11:7-24 is pure monologue. The word is characteristically, though not exclusively, used to introduce Jesus’ replies in controversies, especially in the Fourth Gospel. A simple count of occurrences of the word in all contexts yields fifty-five times in Matthew, thirty times in Mark, forty-six times in Luke, and seventy-eight times in John.

¹²Cited in Jan Helderma, *Die Anapausis im Evangelium Veritatis: Eine vergleichende Untersuchung des valentinianisch-gnostischen Heilsgutes der Ruhe im Evangelium Veritatis und in anderen Schriften der Nag Hammadi-Bibliothek* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 60. Helderma notes, however, the striking fact that the word ἀνάπαυσιν is lacking in the Fourth Gospel is perhaps because the author wanted to avoid a word that had developed Gnostic associations, using instead the words χαρά and εἰρήνη.

¹³The words are probably a parody of Sir 6:23-31 and 51:23-27, where Wisdom is the speaker. Cf. Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 349. The Matthean passage is distinguished from those in Sirach in two crucial respects: Jesus is identified with Wisdom, and the Rest (ἀνάπαυσιν) is connected to the Sabbath by its contiguity with Matt 12:1-14.

¹⁴Cf. Mark 2:27-28. It is remarkable that Matthew, like Luke, omits the first part of the apophthegm, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath,”

that the original issue was not whether the Sabbath was to be kept, but *how* it was to be kept.

In the LXX, ἀναπαύω and ἀνάπαυσις are Sabbath words.¹⁵ Often these words are used to translate the Hebrew שָׁבַת, as well as other words associated with the Sabbath, such as מַנוּחַ, although they also are used for rest in a more generic sense. Frequently, this rest is a gift of God, as in Isa 25:10 (LXX), a fact that is a significant background of Matt 11:28. W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison see the verse as dependent upon the Lord's word to Moses in Exod 33:14, "My presence will go with you, and I will give rest."¹⁶

What is important to see is that Jesus in Matt 11:28-30 introduces a new dimension to the idea of the Sabbath.¹⁷ The idea that is introduced here has no parallel in Jewish literature that I have been able to find, though it is not incompatible with the ideas of the eschatological and the transcendental Sabbaths. I have called this rest that Matthew's Jesus gives to the soul the "existential Sabbath."¹⁸ By placing the two passages in contiguous relationship with each other Matthew links the interior experience with the day.

Before proceeding further it is necessary to note yet another variation because of its later Gnostic development in relation to the foregoing concept. In Rev 14:13, 11, we are told that they who die in the Lord will rest (ἀναπαύσονται) from their toil, in contrast to the worshipers of the beast, who will have no rest (ἀνάπαυσιν), day or night, from their torment. The

which is regarded as the earlier part. See W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991), 2:304, 315.

¹⁵This can easily be seen by surveying the dozens of occurrences listed by Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint and Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament (Including the Apocryphal Books)*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 80-81. See, e.g., Exod 16:23; 23:12; Lev 23:3; Deut 5:14. This point was laid out carefully in an unpublished paper presented by Elizabeth Talbot, "Rest, Eschatology and Sabbath in Matthew 11:28-30: An Investigation of Jesus' Offer of Rest in the Light of the Septuagint's Use of *Anapausis*?" (presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Biblical Literature, New Orleans, 2009). Καταπαύω and κατάπαυσις are synonyms of ἀναπαύω and ἀνάπαυσις.

¹⁶Davies and Allison, 2:288. Against this, however, is the fact that Exod 33:14 (LXX) has κατάπαυειν, not ἀνάπαυειν.

¹⁷See n. 12, above.

¹⁸According to one possible interpretation, the same or a similar conception is seen in Heb 4:1-10, where the καταπαύω word group is used because the passage is a homily based on Ps 95:7-11, where that is the word that is used. See, e.g., Otfried Hofius, *Katapausis: Die Vorstellung vom endzeitlichen Ruheort im Hebräerbrief*, WUNT 11 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1970); Judith Hoch Wray, *Rest as a Theological Metaphor in the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Gospel of Truth: Early Christian Homiletics of Rest*, SBLDS 166 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 25-32.

future tenses used in this passage point to its eschatological fulfillment.¹⁹ But in contrast to the eschatological Sabbath seen earlier, the emphasis here is not on cosmic chronology, but on human destiny. Similarly in *2 Clem.* 5:5 ἀνάπαυσις is a synonym for eternal life in the coming kingdom (ἀνάπαυσις τῆς μελλούσης βασιλείας καὶ ζωῆς αἰωνίου).²⁰

The question may be raised whether these spiritualized understandings of the Sabbath supersede the literal seventh-day Sabbath. A negative answer can be given in the cases of the eschatological Sabbath and the transcendental Sabbath, for both the Rabbis and Philo carefully kept the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath. But what is the relationship of the ἀνάπαυσις of Matt 11:28-30 to the literal seventh-day Sabbath that is the topic of discussion in the following passage in Matthew 12?

I would argue that a close analogy can be seen in the antitheses of Matt 5:21-32, where Jesus deals with the commandments “Thou shalt not kill” and “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” He intensifies their force by underlining their interior meaning. By showing their spiritual and larger meaning he does not nullify their literal meaning. Similarly the deeper meaning of the Sabbath in Matt 11:28-30 does not negate the significance of the literal seventh-day Sabbath for Jesus, as indeed we see in the controversies that follow in the next chapter. The idea seems to be that the weekly Sabbath day is ideally the school of Christ for receiving the rest of soul to which the day points. Thus this logion does for the Sabbath commandment what Matt 5:21-32 does for the commandments against murder and adultery.²¹

¹⁹Cf. Johnston, 47; Helderman, 60.

²⁰This may be the meaning of Rest also in *Odes Sol.* 11:12, but it could be speaking of a present experience. Such is the nature of the Ode that the metaphor is ambiguous.

²¹The antitheses of Matthew 5, when formally analyzed, have three parts: (1) the *protasis*, which states the conventional teaching, “You have heard it said” (e.g., Matt 5:21); (2) the *epitasis*, in which Jesus contrasts his own teaching, “but I say unto you” (e.g., 5:22); and (3) the *catastasis*, in which he reinforces his teaching in various ways such as practical examples, “Therefore . . .” (e.g., 5:23-26). The passage in Matt 11:28–12:13 does not follow this neat pattern, but its elements are there by implication. The *protasis* is the Pharisaic rules about Sabbath-keeping. Thus *m. Šabb.* 7:2 forbids reaping and threshing, a reasonable deduction from Exod 34:21. When the disciples of Jesus plucked ears of grain and rubbed off the husks to satisfy their hunger, it was seen as breaking this rule. Although the *halakab* permitted the Sabbath to be overridden in the case of a life-threatening emergency (i.e., the principle of פקדו נפשו, mortal danger; see e.g., *Mek.* Shabbata 1 on Exod 31:13), Jesus, in Matt 12:9-13, healed a chronic affliction that was not life-threatening, as was the case in nearly all of his Sabbath healings. The implied *epitasis* was: “I, who am the Lord of the Sabbath, give rest from your burdens by alleviating human physical need that distracts from devotion to God and that symbolizes spiritual need. The Sabbath is a day for physical and spiritual healing and doing good.” The *catastasis* is illustrated by the two examples of applying

According to the Matthean Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees in disputation with Jesus were missing this meaning of the Sabbath. They had the Sabbath day, but not the Sabbath experience. They kept the Sabbath outwardly, but not inwardly. From his perspective, they represented one kind of error²² regarding the Sabbath: they separated the day from the experience and discarded the experience. But in making this point, Matthew opened up the possibility of committing the opposite error of replacing the literal day with a vague spiritualization.

This opposite error is represented by the Gnostics.²³ They also separated the day from the experience, but discarded the day. If the Pharisees put too much emphasis on externals (using Matthew's perspective as the reference point), the Gnostics despised externals. Their radical dualism meant a rejection of everything material and physical and of everything literal, for the literal meaning of the Scriptures was, like the body, without value. The only thing of value is the spirit and the "spiritual" meaning of the text.²⁴ Accordingly,

this insight in 12:1-13.

²²The word "error" implies a value judgment, but I intend it in a historical sense: I am taking what I believe to be Matthew's perspective as the point of reference, and hence the standard by which other views are being compared.

²³About Gnosticism, there is now a vast literature. It probably arose from within Christianity, as the existence of a pre-Christian Gnosis has not been proved, but it is not impossible that it arose phoenix-like from the ashes of Jerusalem among disillusioned Jews after A.D. 70. Besides being radically dualistic, it was antinomian and typically anti-Judaistic. It was stoutly opposed by the Christian writers who were subsequently adjudged orthodox, but not without their being consciously or unconsciously affected by it. Some modern treatments of Gnosticism include Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983); R. M. Grant, *Gnosticism and Early Christianity*, 2d ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966); Charles W. Hedrick and Robert Hodgson, eds., *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism, and Early Christianity* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1986); Simone Pétrement, *A Separate God: The Christian Origins of Gnosticism* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990); Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of an Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity*, 2d ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963); Edwin Yamauchi, *Pre-Christian Gnosticism: A Survey of the Proposed Evidences* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973); Giovanni Filoramo, *A History of Gnosticism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

²⁴Our knowledge of ancient Gnostic thought has been greatly expanded by the discovery and publication of the trove of fourth-century Coptic language codices discovered near Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt. The most authoritative English translations with introductions are those in James M. Robinson, gen. ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988). To the Nag Hammadi codices are added two other manuscripts from the separately discovered Berlin Papyrus 8502. The various modern translators are not consistent, however, in their translation of ἀνάπαυσις (the Greek term is carried over unchanged into the Coptic): some have "rest"; others translate it "repose." For this reason, I will use an

the true Sabbath rest is not a literal day, but an exalted experience or mystical state. So for the Gnostic Christians the ἀνάπαυσις of Matt 11:28-30 became a point of departure for doctrines that would have been recognized by neither Jesus nor Matthew.

The process of transition from “literal” to “spiritual” is illustrated in perhaps the best known work in the Nag Hammadi collection, the so-called *Gospel of Thomas*, in Codex II. It is of special interest for several reasons, but two stand out:

First, fragments of the work in the original Greek, discovered at the site of Oxyrhynchus in Egypt, have been known for more than a century.²⁵ The earliest of the Greek fragments comes from the second century, and when compared to the fourth-century Coptic version, they reveal that the text was somewhat fluid, undergoing various modifications. It is possible to detect a subtle intensification of the Gnostic flavor with the passing of time and indeed, even in its Coptic form, it lacks some Gnostic features.²⁶

Second, the work consists of a collection of sayings attributed to Jesus, without any narrative setting and without any obvious logical order.²⁷ The discovery of this document gave credence to the reality of the putative Q source, assumed to have been used by Matthew and Luke, and which was also a collection of dominical sayings. Many of the sayings in the *Gospel of Thomas* have parallels in the canonical Gospels, but many do not.²⁸ Scholars have long debated whether the *Gospel of Thomas* is dependent on the canonical Gospels, therefore secondary to them, or whether it represents an independent witness to the transmission of Jesus’ sayings. It is the second view that has largely prevailed.²⁹ The picture that we are getting is that there was an original Jewish-Christian collection of the teachings of Jesus,³⁰ quite likely dating from the

eclectic translation where necessary and consistently render ἀνάπαυσις (“rest”).

²⁵Pap. Oxy. 1, 654-655.

²⁶Translations of the Coptic version and the Greek fragments are laid out in parallel columns by J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 135-141.

²⁷Modern editors have numbered the sayings, finding 114 of them. Consequently, we now refer to the work in terms of the logion number.

²⁸Elliott, 133-135, supplies a complete list of parallels. See also A. Guillaumont et al., *The Gospel According to Thomas: Coptic Text Established and Translated* (Leiden: Brill, 1959), 59-62.

²⁹Thus Helmut Koester, “Introduction to the Gospel of Thomas” in Robinson, 125; Marvin Meyer, trans. and ed., *The Gospel of Thomas: The Hidden Sayings of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 13. This does not mean, however, that everyone agrees with Koester’s judgment that the *Gospel of Thomas* transmits a more original version of the sayings than the canonical Gospels.

³⁰Even in its fourth-century form, the *Gospel of Thomas* still bears marks of its

first century, which, in the hands of people with a Gnostic orientation, suffered transformation into a document setting forth their views. This is not unlike what other Gnostic literature does with canonical Scriptures.

The Jesus of the *Gospel of Thomas* is a dispenser of enigmatic wisdom. As Marvin Meyer aptly says, “In contrast to the way in which he is portrayed in other gospels, particularly New Testament gospels, Jesus in the Gospel of Thomas performs no physical miracles, reveals no fulfillment of prophecy, announces no apocalyptic kingdom about to disrupt the world order, and dies for no one’s sins.”³¹ Salvation does not come by his blood, but by understanding his mysterious sayings: “Whoever finds the interpretation [*hermeneia*] of these sayings will not taste death” (*Gos. Thom.* 2, brackets original).

Six sayings in the *Gospel of Thomas* speak of Sabbath or Rest (ἀνάπαυσις): 2, 27, 50, 51, 60, 90. One uses the word “Sabbath,” and the others “Rest.” The *Gos. Thom.* 27 survives in both Coptic and Greek (Pap. Oxy. 1).³² The Greek has: “Unless you fast to the world, you shall in no way find the Kingdom of God; and unless you sabbatize the sabbath [ἐάν μὴ σαββατίσητε τὸ σάββατον], you shall not see the Father.” The only significant difference in the Coptic is the change of “Kingdom of God” to simply “Kingdom,” which represents a closer conformity with Gnostic thought. The Coptic translator also apparently had difficulty with the expression “sabbatize the Sabbath” (which is indeed awkward also for the English translator!) and so rendered it (roughly) as “keep the Sabbath as Sabbath.”³³

Tjitze Baarda has studied this saying very intensively,³⁴ acknowledging that the saying may go back to a Jewish-Christian form criticizing the wrong observance of the Sabbath, “so that the sense may be ‘If you do not truly keep the Sabbath,’ or ‘If you do not keep the true Sabbath,’ or also ‘If you do not make the Sabbath a real Sabbath.’”³⁵ This would be in line with what Jesus

Jewish-Christian roots. Thus in saying 12, when the disciples ask Jesus who will be their leader after he departs, Jesus says: “Wherever you have come, you will go to James the Just, for whose sake heaven and earth came into being.” Parallels to this manner of speaking are common in the Rabbinic literature. See, e.g., *b. Sanh.* 98b.

³¹Meyer, 10.

³²Pap. Oxy. 1 dates from the second century and is the oldest of the three Greek fragments.

³³A similarly awkward passage occurs in *Ign. Magn.* 9:1, μηκέτι σαββατίζοντες ἀλλὰ κατὰ κυριακῆν ζῶην ζῶντες.

³⁴T. Baarda, “‘If You Do Not Sabbatize the Sabbath. . .’: The Sabbath as God or World in Gnostic Understanding (Ev. Thom., Log. 27),” in *The Knowledge of God in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. R. Van den Broek, T. Baarda, and J. Mansfeld (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 178-201.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 199. Baarda cites authors supporting each of these renderings. The first part of the saying, he says, may have originally come from an encratite or ascetic source. Meyer, 81, says “keeping the sabbath a[s] sabbath seems to imply that one

apparently meant in Matt 11:28-30. But Baarda concludes that, whatever the saying may have meant in its original source, the *Gospel of Thomas* as we have it has transformed the meaning of the saying so that its significance is quite different.

Baarda concludes that the two parts of the saying make a parallelism and thus say the same thing.³⁶ “Fasting from the world” means the same thing as “Sabbatizing the Sabbath,” and “world” and “Sabbath” are equivalent. But the *Gospel of Thomas* opposes literal fasting (*Gos. Thom.* 6, 14, 104). “These passages demonstrate that within a Gnostic setting there is a rather critical attitude towards religious duties or ceremonial prescriptions commonly found in Judaism and early Christianity. . . . [These] are merely outward expressions of religion which the Gnostic believer due to his interiorization of faith or knowledge, does not value.”³⁷ Fasting from the world is, therefore, a metaphor for “the total denial of present reality of the Cosmos and its Creator to enable the finding of the true reality of the Kingdom and the Father.”³⁸

Thus Baarda finds that “Sabbath” is almost synonymous with “world” and its creator, Yaldebaoth, the demiurgic god of the Jews, the god of this world. To sabbatize the Sabbath means to come to rest with respect to the Sabbath/world,³⁹ that is, to become fully detached from it. So “Sabbath” represents a negative thing. But “Rest” (ἀνάπαυσις) is, on the contrary, the ultimate goal of the Gnostic. Thus the Gnostics radically separated and placed in opposition to each other Sabbath and Rest, just as they separated body and spirit, and Jesus and Christ.

We now turn to *Gos. Thom.* 2, which also has been preserved in both Greek (Pap. Oxy. 654) and Coptic. As we compare the versions, we find that the Coptic drops the reference to Rest. The Greek reads as follows: “[Jesus said]: Let him who seeks not cease seeking until he finds, and when he finds he shall wonder; having wondered he shall reign [βασιλεύσει], and reigning he shall rest [ἀναπαύσεται].” The Coptic has: “Jesus said: Let him

should rest in a truly significant way and separate oneself from worldly concerns.” Uwe-Karsten Plisch, following a suggestion from Peter Nagel, takes σάββατον in the sense of “week” and translates: “If you do not take the (entire) week into a Sabbath, you will not see the Father” (*The Gospel of Thomas: Original Text with Commentary*, trans. Gesine Schenke Robinson [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2008], 93).

³⁶Baarda, 195-199.

³⁷Ibid., 198. Cf. Rudolph, 263.

³⁸Baarda, 199. As is well known, Gnostics despised the creation of the material world and its creator god, who (in their view) is a bungling inferior god or demiurge. The God of light, the Father, is not responsible for the mess that is the material world, or for the physical bodies in which the spirits have been entombed. For a comprehensive account of Gnostic teachings, see Rudolph, 53-272.

³⁹Baarda, 200-201.

who seeks not cease seeking until he finds, and when he finds, he will be troubled, and when he has been troubled, he will marvel and he will reign over the All.”⁴⁰ Helmut Koester and Elaine Pagels see the saying as presenting “an eschatological timetable. . . . The disciples have sought and found and marveled, but their ruling and resting will come only in the future. At the present time, they still carry the burden of the flesh.”⁴¹

The idea is somewhat unpacked in another work from Nag Hammadi, called the *Dialogue of the Savior*.⁴² In *Dial. Sav.* 49-50, Judas says, “Behold! The archons⁴³ dwell above us, so it is they who will rule over us!” The Lord says, “It is you who will rule over them!” In *Dial. Sav.* 65-66, Matthew says, “Why do we not rest right now?” The Lord says, “When you lay down these burdens.” This will happen “when you abandon the works which will not be able to follow you, then you will rest” (*Dial. Sav.* 68). (It is difficult not to see here a deliberate contradiction to Rev 14:13.) We find here, then, the meaning of ruling and resting. The Gnostics will overcome the rule of the Archons and will find rest. When? Ultimately, when at death they are liberated from the flesh born of woman. Using a metaphor also found in the *Gospel of Thomas* (21, 37), *Dial. Sav.* 85 says the release will come when they strip off their bodies: “But you, as children of truth, not with these transitory garments are you to clothe yourselves. Rather, I say to you that you will become blessed when you strip yourselves!” Then they will find Rest in him who is always at Rest.

When the soul of the Gnostic rises from the world to return to the Realm of Light, from which it had been separated and cast into a stinking body, it is interrogated by the Archons, which it must pass. In *Gos. Thom.* 50, Jesus coaches them about what to say:

If they say to you: “From where have you originated?” say to them “We have come from the Light, where the Light has originated through itself. It stood and it revealed itself in their image.” If they say to you: “Who are you?” say “we are His sons and we are the elect of the Living Father.” If

⁴⁰For a discussion of the composition of this and parallel sayings, see Ernst Bammel, “Rest and Rule,” *VC* 23 (1969): 88-90.

⁴¹Helmut Koester and Elaine Pagels, “Introduction to *Dialogue of the Savior*” in Robinson, 245.

⁴²*Dialogue of the Savior* is commonly referred to in terms of its location in the Nag Hammadi library: Codex number, page number, line number, thus: III, 121.4. But it is susceptible to being divided up into logia of Jesus and his disciples; this has been done by its modern editors. I shall thus refer to it, using the saying numbers in Robinson, 246-255.

⁴³In Gnostic thought, the Archons are the principalities and powers that, together with the god of this world, rule over the world and the souls imprisoned in it, imposing onerous law and fate.

they ask you: “What is the sign of your Father in you?” say to them: “It is movement and Rest [ἀνάπαυσις].”

That is, they have internalized the attributes of the God of Light, who always lives and rests.

The *Gos. Thom.* 51 introduces another dimension: “His disciples said to him: ‘When will the Rest of the dead come about and when will the new world come?’ He said to them: ‘What you await has already come, but you know it not.’” We find here the Gnostic-realized eschatology. Because the Gnostic knows that the Father is Rest, he himself is already resting in the Father, he is already resting with respect to this world and its creator/sabbath.⁴⁴ It is a case of “already-but-not-yet,” a future hope, yet a present experience. The Kingdom of the Father is known to the Gnostic, though the world sees it not. The Gnostic knows that he came from the Kingdom and will return to it, and because of this enlightenment he has the Rest. It is within him. The *Gospel of Truth*, a Valentinian Gnostic work, explains it thus:

Since the deficiency came into being because the Father was not known, therefore, when the Father is known, from that moment on the deficiency will no longer exist. As in the case of the ignorance of a person, when he comes to have knowledge [γνώσις], his ignorance vanishes of itself, as the darkness vanishes when the light appears, so also the deficiency vanishes in the perfection” (*Gos. Truth* 24-25).

By dying to the world through knowledge, the Gnostic is already perfect, already at rest. By definition, he cannot sin. He is free from all law because he is no longer subject to the Archons and the Demiurge. He is not of the material world, and he is not wedded to his body.⁴⁵ He is detached from all of that.

The *Gos. Thom.* 60 uses an extravagant metaphor: “You too, look for a place for yourselves within Rest, lest you become a corpse and be eaten.” As Kurt Rudolph remarks, “Repose and safety are expressions for the possession of redemption which is attained already in this world.”⁴⁶

Finally we come to the *Gos. Thom.* 90: “Jesus said, ‘Come unto me, for my yoke is easy and my lordship is mild, and you will find Rest for yourselves.’” Gnostic use of the saying in Matt 11:28-30, whether quotation, allusion, or parallel, was frequent.⁴⁷ Here Jan Helderma points out an important difference from the canonical version that should not be overlooked. In Matthew, Jesus gives Rest (11:28), but the Gnostic *himself* achieves Rest

⁴⁴Baarda, 201.

⁴⁵One is struck by the similarity of the concept of ἀνάπαυσις in Gnosticism to the concept of Nirvana in Buddhism and classical Hinduism.

⁴⁶Rudolph, 221.

⁴⁷For references, see Helderma, 114.

through his renunciation and forsaking of the material world.⁴⁸ The Matthean ἀνάπαυσις is a gift, not an achievement.⁴⁹

Ἀνάπαυσις, as Helderman abundantly demonstrates, is a major motif in the *Gospel of Truth*,⁵⁰ but here I must limit myself to one passage that explicitly mentions the Sabbath:

He is the shepherd who left behind the ninety-nine sheep which were not lost. He went searching for the one which had gone astray. He rejoiced when he found it, for ninety-nine is a number that is in the left hand which holds it. But when one is found, the entire number passes to the right hand. As that which lacks the one—that is, the entire right hand—draws what was deficient and takes it from the left-hand side and brings it to the right, so too the number becomes one hundred. It is the sign of the one who is in their sound; it is the Father. Even on the Sabbath, he labored for the sheep which he found fallen into the pit. He gave life to the sheep, having brought it up from the pit in order that you might know interiorly—you the sons of interior knowledge—what is the Sabbath, on which it is not fitting for salvation to be idle, in order that you may speak from the day from above, which has no night, and from the light which does not sink because it is perfect.⁵¹

This is an interesting passage for several reasons. It is partly, as I have argued elsewhere,⁵² a permutation of an apocalyptic passage. But here we are concerned to know what the Gnostics understood by it.

It is part of a passage dependent upon Matt 12:11 and possibly John 5:17, exhorting the spiritual Gnostics to do the “mission work” of awakening the imprisoned spirits to their true nature. It holds up no less an example than the Son as Savior. He was active on the Sabbath, but with what meaning? The *Gospel of Truth* goes on to say, “Say, then, from the heart that you are the perfect day and in you dwells the light that does not fail” (32:311-333). Baarda argues for the implication that the Sabbath, by contrast, is not the perfect day (indeed, the “perfect day” is not a day), and the passage describes the saving

⁴⁸Ibid. Of course, if one took only Matt 11:29 without v. 28, the case would not be as clear. However that may be, Helderman, 114, is correct in pointing out that after the Gnostic has received the enlightening revelation it is up to him.

⁴⁹Augustine, however, overstated matters when he said, “Christ is the true Sabbath” (cited in Davies and Allison, 2:287). Jesus does not say that he *is* the Rest, but that he *gives* the Rest.

⁵⁰The *Gospel of Truth* probably dates from the middle of the second century, and whether or not it was written by Valentinus himself, it certainly represents the Valentinian brand of Gnosticism. It exhibits a reconceptualizing of the NT writings upon which it is based. See the introduction by Harold W. Attridge and George W. MacRae in Robinson, 38-39.

⁵¹*Gos. Truth* 31.36–32.31.

⁵²Johnston, 49.

activity of the Savior of the world. The Sabbath is identified with the created world and the creator demiurge, as Baarda interpreted it in *Gos. Thom.* 27. He is able to cite other Gnostic references, such as the *Interp. Know.* 11, where spiritual slumber brought labor and “the Sabbath which is the world.”⁵³

All this be as it may, whether the Sabbath represents something positive (like the Pleroma), or something negative (like the world or the demiurge god of the Jews who created it), it can be agreed that it is being used in Gnostic literature as a metaphor for something that is not a day of the week. It is also clearly not identical with the Rest (ἀνάπαυσις), which is reabsorption into the Father of Light who is always at rest.

There are a great number of other relevant passages that we cannot review here, nor is it necessary to do so.⁵⁴ They will only reinforce what we have already seen in the Gnostic literature. Basically, this can be summarized as follows. The Sabbath and the Rest are quite different things. Whether literal or metaphysical, the Sabbath is representative of this dark world. The Rest to which the Savior summons the spiritual people (Gnostics) is the Rest from which they primordially fell. It is a return to the Father’s Realm of Light, so that which was lost from the Deity is restored. They came from it and they return to it. Rest is thus an eschatological goal, but it is not only that. Even before liberation from the body it can be experienced now when the enlightened soul spiritually detaches itself from the world, the flesh, and the demiurge, and all their works. It is thus both a future destiny and a present experience. Gnostics have heaven in their hearts. In modern terms, eschatology and psychology are one. The Sabbath day means nothing good; the Rest (ἀνάπαυσις) is everything to hope for.

Now we may turn back to the Great Church, represented by the great early defender of the faith, Justin Martyr. Justin flourished in the middle of the second century, at the same time as the great Gnostic teachers Valentinus and Marcion. He knew about them, and even wrote a tract against them.⁵⁵ But he breathed the same air as they, and it is not surprising to find similarities as well as differences.

⁵³Robinson, 476; cf. Baarda, 189-190.

⁵⁴Helderman, 85-231, lists and examines all the relevant passages of the *Gospel of Truth*, as well as others (see also 282-330).

⁵⁵Justin, *1 Apol.* 26. After attacking the Simonians and Marcion, specifically for deploring the doctrine that the Creator God is inferior to another Great God, he concludes: “But I have a treatise against all the heresies that have existed already composed, which, if you wish to read it, I will give you.” He repeats his attack in chap. 58. The tract that he mentions has not survived, but it was apparently used by Irenaeus in his massive *Against Heresies*, wherein great attention is given to the Valentinians (*Haer.* 4.6.2). In his *Dial.* 35, Justin specifically lists Marcionists, Valentinians, Basilidians, and Saturnalians.

Justin deprecates external observances that are devoid of interior experience (as did Pseudo-Barnabas⁵⁶ and the Gnostics), such as he charges the Jews with. Thus in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, a Jew, Justin writes:

For what is the use of baptism which cleanses the flesh and body alone? Baptize the soul from wrath and from covetousness, from envy, and from hatred; and lo! the body is pure. For this is the symbolic significance of the unleavened bread, that you do not commit the old deeds of wicked leaven. But you have understood all things in a carnal sense.⁵⁷

This desire to spiritualize at the expense of what Justin regards as “a carnal sense” carried over to his understanding of the Sabbath, about which he says:

The new law requires you to keep perpetual sabbath, and you, because you are idle for one day, suppose you are pious, not discerning why this has been commanded you: and if you eat unleavened bread, you say the will of God has been fulfilled. The Lord our God does not take pleasure in such observances: if there is any perjured person or thief among you, let him cease to be so; if any adulterer, let him repent; then he has kept the sweet and true sabbaths of God.⁵⁸

For Justin, then, true Sabbath-keeping is not ceasing from labor, but ceasing from sin. The literal seventh-day Sabbath, like other fleshly observances of Judaism, had been merely a temporary accommodation to the spiritual weakness of the Jewish nation, which needed such things as reminders.⁵⁹ Now that the spiritual reality has come, the outward ritual has no value.

Justin differs from the Gnostics in that he does not give the word “Sabbath” a negative connotation, representing the world or an inferior Jewish god. Neither does he believe that a spiritual enlightenment about one’s true identity and destiny places a person beyond sinning or accountability to law. But he does resemble them in completely spiritualizing the Sabbath, giving it a meaning somewhat analogous to the Gnostic ἀνάπαυσις: true Sabbath-keeping is an interior experience of the soul, divorced from any external observance such as being idle on a fixed day of the week; but it does have

⁵⁶Justin was preceded by Pseudo-Barnabas, for whom the Sabbath is a rest that can be experienced only in the eschaton, as noted above. See *Barn.* 15:6-7. From *Barn.* 15:4-6, it appears that the Sabbath referred to is a millennial or eternal one. The word used for rest there is not ἀνάπαυω, but κατὰπαυω, which is the word used in Hebrews 4.

⁵⁷Justin, *Dial.* 14.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 12:3. Justin also argues that the OT patriarchs, like nature itself, did not “sabbatize” (chaps. 19, 23).

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 18:2, 3; 19:2; 21:2. Among the other outward rituals discarded by Justin are the water ablutions, which he calls baptisms (e.g., *Dial.* 14). While he thus deprecates these physical acts, it does not seem to occur to him that the same thing could be said of the Christian rites of water baptism and the eucharist.

behavioral consequences—one no longer sins. One attains to the Rest not by γνώσις, but by repentance.

Justin does not look like a radical innovator. He is probably representative of many in his generation who were seeking to establish Christian identity in distinction from Judaism, on one side, and from Gnostic modes of thought, on the other. In fleeing from one, they could run into the arms of the other.⁶⁰ Looking back we can see now that both the Scilla and the Charybdis involved divorcing external from internal, Sabbath day from Sabbath experience. Having separated them, they discarded one or the other.

Many years ago F. Crawford Burkitt made a striking observation. In the third century, Tertullian wrote a long refutation of the doctrines of Marcion. Shortly afterward either Tertullian or someone closely associated with him compiled a treatise against the Jews. The interesting thing is that about half of the treatise against the Jews was copied out of *Against Marcion*, book three. “The important thing is that the same arguments that were thought appropriate to use against the Jews were thought appropriate to use against Marcion the anti-Jew. Surprising as it seems at first sight, the Church had to a great extent the same controversy with both opponents.”⁶¹

Perhaps we can draw an analogy to this in respect to the Sabbath. Matthew would have had the same controversy with both Pharisees and Gnostics: both separated the day from the experience and discarded one or the other. But from his perspective, soul rest and sabbath-day rest must be laminated together.

⁶⁰Irenaeus is a complex case. On one hand, he held a high view of the Decalogue and upheld the Matthean ethos of Sabbath-keeping (*Haer.* 4.8.2-3; 4.12.1-5; 4.13.1). On the other, he partly followed Justin in spiritualizing the Sabbath: “The Sabbaths taught that we should continue day by day in God’s service” (*Haer.* 4.16.1-2), and he may have even equated it (or the ἀνάπαυσις τοῦ θεοῦ) with the Kingdom (*Haer.* 4.16.1), although it is unclear what the original Greek (which lies behind the Latin translation in which form alone this part of his work comes down to us) may have said (see n. in *ANF* 1:481).

⁶¹F. Crawford Burkitt, *The Gospel History and Its Transmission*, 2d ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1907), 306-307.

THE CONTROVERSY OVER FASTING ON SATURDAY BETWEEN CONSTANTINOPLE AND ROME

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The question of fasting on Saturday was a significant point of theological debate between the Eastern and Western churches during the first millennium of Christian history.¹ This issue is closely related to the fact that the Christian church, during the first several centuries after Christ, celebrated both Saturday and Sunday as weekly days of worship.

For example, a church historian of the fifth century, Socrates Scholasticus of Constantinople, noted that “For although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the Sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this.”² The *Apostolic Constitutions*, compiled in the fourth century probably in Antioch, states similarly that Christians should keep the Sabbath (Saturday) and the Lord’s day (Sunday) festivals “because the former is the memorial of the creation, and the latter of the resurrection.”³ It thus seems logical to assume, on the basis of these and other statements, that, with the exception of Rome and Alexandria, “throughout the [Christian] world” there were worship services on both Saturday and Sunday as late as the fifth century,⁴ with the Western church appearing to emphasize the importance of Sunday as the weekly day of worship. On the other hand, the Eastern church seemed to be torn by its desire to remain in harmony with its understanding of apostolic tradition and its need to keep good relations with Rome.

¹Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 3 vols. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 3:378-386.

²Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.22, (NPNF² 2:132).

³*Apostolic Constitutions* 7.23, titled “Constitutions of the Holy Apostles” (ANF 7:469): “But keep the Sabbath, and the Lord’s day festival; because the former is the memorial of the creation, and the latter of the resurrection.” Cf. *ibid.*, 8.33 (ANF 7.495): “Peter and Paul do make the following constitutions. Let the slaves work five days; but on the Sabbath-day and the Lord’s day let them have leisure to go to church for instruction in piety. We have said that the Sabbath is on account of the creation and the Lord’s day of the resurrection.”

⁴Sozomen writes: “The people of Constantinople, and almost everywhere, assemble together on the Sabbath, as well as on the first day of the week, which custom is never observed in Rome or at Alexandria. There are several cities and villages in Egypt where, contrary to the usage established elsewhere, the people meet together on Sabbath evenings, and, although they have dined previously, partake of the mysteries” (*Ecclesiastical History* 7.19 [NPNF² 2:390]). Cf. Kenneth A. Strand, “The Sabbath and Sunday from the Second through the Fifth Centuries” in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, ed. Kenneth A. Strand (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982), 323-332.

The Eastern-Western conflict over the day of worship is related to the question of fasting on Sabbath. These conflicts are especially evident in three historical events: the Fifth-Sixth Ecumenical Council held in Trullo in 691, the ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the Bulgarian church, and the Great Schism of 1054.

The purpose of this paper is to describe and critically assess the canons of the Council in Trullo regarding the Saturday-fasting controversy, the encyclical of Patriarch Photius connected to the status of the Bulgarian church, and the documents associated with the Great Schism. This analysis attempts to explain why the matter of fasting on Saturday played such a central role in disagreements between the Eastern and Western churches.

The Fifth–Sixth Ecumenical Council in Trullo

The Council in Trullo, called by Emperor Justinian II in 691, met in the imperial banqueting hall (*in trullum*) at Constantinople.⁵ The purpose of this council, also known as the Fifth-Sixth Council,⁶ was to complete the work of the Fifth (553) and Sixth (681) Ecumenical Councils.⁷ In the absence of the emperor, the council was presided over by Paul III, the ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople, and attended by Patriarchs Petros III of Alexandria, Georgios II of Antioch, Anastasios II of Jerusalem, as well as by 211 bishops.⁸

There are disagreements among scholars as to whether the Western church was officially represented at this council. Historians and theologians of the Western church claim that Rome was not represented. An evidence of that claim is found in Pope Sergius III's rejection of certain canons of the council, particularly those statements giving the patriarch of Constantinople equal status with the Roman pope.⁹ However, historians of the Eastern church point out that the pope of Rome was represented through the delegation of bishops from Eastern Illyricum. In addition to these Western representatives, there were four bishops from Crete: Basilios of Gortyna, Nikitas of Kydonia, Sisinos of Chersonisos, and Theopemptos. Basilios of Gortyna signed the canons of the synod in the following way: "Basilios episcopus Gortinae, metropolis Christum amantis Cretae insulae et . . . totius synodi sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae" ("Basilios, bishop of Gortyna, metropolis of the Lord loving island of Crete and . . . of the whole synod of the Holy Church of

⁵Jerald C. Brauer, ed., *The Westminster Dictionary of Church History* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), s.v. "Trullan Synod."

⁶The Fifth-Sixth Council is known also in church history as *Pentekete* (Greek) and *Quinisextum* (Latin).

⁷The Fifth Ecumenical Council was convened in 553 in order to confirm the anathema on Origen, Didymos the Blind, and Evagrius Pontikos for the Platonizing tendencies. The Sixth Ecumenical Council was also held in the *trullum* of the imperial palace in Constantinople from 680 to 681 (Isaias Simonopetrites, "The Pastoral Sensitivity of the Canons of the Council in Trullo [691-692]," *GOTR* 40 [1995]: 45-46).

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹Brauer, 830.

Rome”).¹⁰ Nevertheless in spite of this evidence, the question of whether Rome was officially represented at the Council of Trullo will probably remain a point of debate between the Western and Eastern churches.

However, what is of interest for this work is that out of the 102 canons issued by the Fifth-Sixth Council, the 29th, 52d, 55th, 56th, and 89th refer to the issue of fasting in general, as well as to fasting on Saturday.¹¹ Why was so much space dedicated to the problem of fasting, particularly to fasting on Saturday? What is the historical background of this controversy?

From apostolic times Christians have practiced fasting.¹² Most early Christians of Jewish background apparently followed the Jewish custom of fasting and prayer on Mondays and Thursdays. However, contrary to that Jewish practice, at least some in the Christian church near the end of the first century adopted Wednesdays and Fridays as the days of fasting.¹³ Furthermore, by the end of the fifth century, the Latin church replaced Wednesday with Saturday as a fasting day,¹⁴ probably in opposition to the Jews and to Christians of Jewish background or leanings who were reluctant to change their practice of fasting on certain days.¹⁵ Nevertheless, in the Eastern churches it was a general rule that there should be no fasting on Saturday and, specifically, that Saturday as well as Sunday should be exempt from fasting in the period before Easter.¹⁶ The Council in Trullo strongly reacted against these changes made by Rome, claiming that by introducing Saturday as the day of fasting, the Roman church acted against the apostolic tradition clearly expressed in the *Apostolic Constitutions* and that should be followed by all Christians.¹⁷ What follows is a short review of the key points mentioned in canons 29, 52, 55, 56, and 89 of the Council in Trullo concerning the controversy of fasting in general and particularly on Saturday.

Canon 29

A canon of the Synod of Carthage says that the holy mysteries of the altar are not to be performed but by men who are fasting, except on one day in the year on which the Supper of the Lord is celebrated. At that time, on

¹⁰Ioan Dura, “The Canons of the Sixth Ecumenical Synod concerning Fasting and Their Application to the Present Needs of the Orthodox Faithful,” *GOTR* 40 (1995): 153-154.

¹¹See Archimandrite Akakios, *Fasting in the Orthodox Church* (Etna, CA: [np], 1990), 107.

¹²See Acts 13:2; 14:23.

¹³Tia M. Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 34-35. See also Brauer, s.v. “Fast Days.”

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Augustus Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1847-1855), 3:402.

¹⁶Ibid, 402.

¹⁷Kolbaba, 34-35.

account perhaps of certain occasions in those places useful to the Church, even the holy Fathers themselves made use of this dispensation. But since nothing leads us to abandon exact observance, we decree that the Apostolic and Patristic tradition shall be followed; and define that it is not right to break the fast on the fifth feria of the last week of Lent, and thus to do dishonour to the whole of Lent.¹⁸

The pronouncement issued by the Synod in Carthage declared that the Holy Eucharist can be officiated by nonfasting priests once a year on Holy Thursdays. The reasoning behind this pronouncement was that Jesus celebrated the “Pascha of the law” with his disciples before offering his own “spiritual Pascha,” and thus the apostles had not fasted when they had eaten the latter, since they had already taken “Pascha of the law.”¹⁹

However, the fathers of the Council in Trullo amended this pronouncement made by the Synod of Carthage, declaring that the clergy should fast whenever they celebrate the holy liturgy, and that the Lenten fast, as well as that of Wednesday and Friday, is obligatory. Thus the priests should follow the tradition of the apostles and the fathers, and “the fast should not be broken upon the fifth *feria* [Maundy Thursday] of the last week of Lent, and so the whole Lent be dishonoured.”²⁰ Therefore, only those priests who are fasting can perform the liturgy.

It seems obvious that this assertion was affirmed in opposition to what was the practice in the Western part of Christianity; namely, the Church of Rome was allowing its priests to carry out the holy liturgy on the Thursday of Lent without fasting.²¹

Canon 52

On all days of the holy fast of Lent, except on the Sabbath, the Lord's day and the holy day of the Annunciation, the Liturgy of the Presanctified is to be said.²²

During Lent the holy liturgy was offered only on Saturdays and Sundays when fasting was not permitted. The Synod of Laodicea in canon 49 thus established for the duration of Lent the practice of keeping a part of the gifts sanctified in the liturgy of Saturdays and Sundays on the altar so that the believers could receive Holy Communion on week days.²³ “The bread once offered and consecrated is not to be consecrated anew on another day but a new offering is made of what was before consecrated and presanctified.”²⁴ In

¹⁸“The Canons of the Council in Trullo,” *NPNF*² 14:378. Cf. N. Milas, *Pravila Pravoslavne Crkve s Tumatzenjima* (Novi Sad, 1895-1896), 136.

¹⁹“The Canons of the Council in Trullo,” *NPNF*² 14:378. Cf. Dura, 150.

²⁰“The Canons of the Council in Trullo,” *NPNF*² 14:378.

²¹See Dura, 151.

²²“The Canons of the Council in Trullo,” *NPNF*² 14:389.

²³*Ibid.* See also Dura, 151.

²⁴*NPNF*² 14:389, notes on Canon 52 by van Espen.

order not to interrupt the fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays, the presanctified gifts were received in the evening after Vespers, when only the liturgy of the presanctified gifts was celebrated and not the complete liturgy.

Thus on Saturdays and Sundays, when fasting was not permitted even during Lent, the complete liturgy was celebrated. Consequently, the content of canon 52 of the Council in Trullo preserved this custom of the liturgy of the presanctified gifts decreed by the Synod of Laodicea.

Although one can find a large number of possible explanations to understand this clear distinction between Saturday, Sunday, and other days of the week, canon 52 seems to indicate that in the early centuries of the Christian church there was a special place in the worship schedule not only for Sunday, but also for Saturday. The fact that the period of Lent was considered to be one of the most sacred and significant of all festivals in the church's yearly calendar raises the following questions: Why was the liturgy during Lent offered on both Saturdays and Sundays? What was the reason for forbidding fasting on Saturdays and Sundays?

Canon 55

Since we understand that in the city of the Romans, in the holy fast of Lent they fast on the Saturdays, contrary to the ecclesiastical observance which is traditional, it seemed good to the holy synod that also in the Church of the Romans the canon shall immovably stand fast which says: "If any cleric shall be found to fast on a Sunday or Saturday (except on one occasion only) he is to be deposed; and if he is a layman he shall be cut off."²⁵

In this canon, the fathers of the Council in Trullo reacted against the noncanonical practice of fasting by the church in Rome on Saturdays and Sundays during Lent. At the end of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, "Ecclesiastical Canon" no. 64 states: "If any one of the clergy be found to fast on the Lord's day, or on the Sabbath-day, excepting one only, let him be deprived; but if he be one of the laity, let him be suspended."²⁶ On the basis of this statement, the Eastern church adopted, as a general rule, that there should be no fasting

²⁵"The Canons of the Council in Trullo," *NPNF*² 14:391.

²⁶"Constitutions of the Holy Apostles," *ANF* 7:504. The *Apostolic Constitutions* 7.23 also states on which days of the week Christians are to fast and not to fast and for what reasons: "But let not your fast be with the hypocrites; for they fast on the second and fifth days of the week. But do you either fast the entire five days, or on the fourth day of the week, and on the day of the Preparation, because on the fourth day the condemnation went out against the Lord, Judas then promising to betray Him for money; and you must fast on the day of the Preparation, because on that day the Lord suffered the death of the cross under Pontius Pilate. But keep the Sabbath, and the Lord's day festival; because the former is the memorial of the creation, and the latter of the resurrection. But there is one only Sabbath to be observed by you in the whole year, which is that of our Lord's burial, on which men ought to keep a fast, but not a festival. For inasmuch as the Creator was then under the earth, the sorrow for him is more forcible than the joy for the creation; for the Creator is more honourable by nature and dignity than His own creatures" (*ANF* 7:469).

on Sabbath, and that Sabbath and Sunday should be excluded from the period of fasting before Lent. The one exception in the whole liturgical year was the Sabbath, “which is that of the Lord’s burial,” “for inasmuch as the Creator was then under the earth, the sorrow for him is more forcible than the joy of creation.”²⁷

Contrary to the position of the Eastern church and the *Apostolic Constitutions*, the Western church, in opposition to Jews and Judaists (Christians of Jewish background or leanings), adopted the practice of observing Saturday as a day of fasting. However, Augustine, Ambrose of Milan, and Jerome claimed that this matter had not been decided by divine authority and that there was no particular connection with the essence of faith and of sanctification. They believed that “in such matters each individual should follow the custom of his own church, or of the country in which he resided, and strive that the bond of charity might not be broken by differences in such unimportant matters.”²⁸ Augustine writes that “God did not lay down a rule concerning fasting or eating on the seventh-day of the week, either at the time of His hallowing that day because in it He rested from His works, or afterwards when He gave precepts to the Hebrew nation concerning the observance of that day.”²⁹ Thus he emphasizes that neither the Holy Scriptures nor the universal tradition of the church says anything decisive on this point and that only weak minds insist on this practice as being the only right one.³⁰

In spite of Augustine’s position, however, which seems to express a great dose of religious liberty in the domain of “unessential matters,” the historical

²⁷Ibid. The period of fasting before Easter was intended to give an opportunity to Christians to engage in the process of self-examination, repentance, abstinence from the pleasures of the world, the diligent reading of God’s word in order to be able to enter into the process of commemoration of the new creation in humanity which came from the resurrection and glorification of Christ (see Neander, 3:408).

²⁸Neander, 3:402.

²⁹Augustine, *Epistle* 36, to Casulanus, in *NPNF*¹ 1:265-270.

³⁰Augustine writes: “As to the question on which you wish my opinion, whether it is lawful to fast on the seventh day of the week, I answer, that if it were wholly unlawful, neither Moses nor Elijah, nor our Lord himself, would have fasted for forty successive days. But by the same argument it is proved that even on the Lord’s day fasting is not unlawful. And yet, if any one were to think that the Lord’s day should be appointed a day of fasting, in the same way as the seventh day is observed by some, such a man would be regarded, and not unjustly, as bringing a great cause of offence into the Church. For in those things concerning which the divine Scriptures have laid down no definitive rule, the custom of the people of God, or the practices instituted by their fathers, are to be held as the law of the Church. If we choose to fall into a debate about these things, and to denounce one party merely because their custom differs from that of others, the consequence must be an endless contention, in which the utmost care is necessary lest the storm of conflict overcast with clouds the calmness of brotherly love, while the strength is spent in mere controversy which cannot adduce on either side any decisive testimonies of truth” (ibid.). See also Neander, 3:402.

evidence shows something different; namely, that the “Roman church . . . from a very early period required uniformity in things unessential.”³¹ The Roman church unmistakably claimed that “this custom [of fasting on Sabbath] came down from Peter, the first of the apostles, and hence ought to be universally observed.”³²

Further, at the same time that Augustine voiced his opinion about fasting, the Roman bishop Innocent issued a declaration to the Spanish bishop Decentius, “that the Sabbath, like Friday, must be observed as a fast day.”³³ In opposition to the entire ecclesiastical tradition expressed in the *Apostolic Constitutions* that the Sabbath is the commemoration of the joy of creation, Innocent argued that the Sabbath necessarily belongs to the period of sorrow because after Jesus’ crucifixion the apostles were plunged into grief and hid themselves due to fear, and that the Sabbath precedes Sunday, the joyful day of resurrection.³⁴

The controversy over fasting on Sabbath unmistakably shows that “the displacement of Saturday by Sunday as the day of weekly Christian worship and rest was a long and slow process. . . . Evidence from the fifth century indicates that also at that time both Sabbath and Sunday were observed generally throughout the Christian world, except in Rome and Alexandria.”³⁵ Milas writes:

Christians celebrated Sunday, the day on which Christ was resurrected from death and through this accomplished his work of redemption. This day for Christians was a day of joy and brotherly meetings in Christ as well as the day of repentance for committed sins. Almost the same meaning was attributed to the Sabbath. Christians considered the Sabbath too as a day of joy and remembrance of the creation of the world and the rest of God.³⁶

On Sabbath in the Eastern church, assemblies were held, sermons preached, and communion celebrated.³⁷ Two canons issued by the Synod of Laodicea in Phrygia in 360 mentioned the Sabbath and some of the activities that the Christians should practice on Sabbath. Canon 16 states that “On Saturday, the Gospels and other portions of the Scripture shall be read aloud.”³⁸ However, in apparently sharp contradiction, canon 29 of the same Synod proposes that “Christians shall not judaize and be idle on Saturday, but shall work on that day; but the Lord’s day they shall especially honour, in every way possible as Christians. If however, they are found judaizing, they

³¹Neander, 3:403.

³²Ibid.

³³“Sabbato jejunandum esse ratio evidentissima demonstrat” (ibid.).

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Strand, 330. See also, Milas, 136.

³⁶Milas, 136.

³⁷Neander, 401.

³⁸“The Canons of the Synod of Laodicea,” *NPNF*² 14:133.

shall be shut out from Christ.”³⁹ While this is a statement against the practice of judaizing, however, Western Christianity was not yet ready to acknowledge fully that the real origin of the change of the day of fasting was in opposition to the Jewish communities, asserting instead that Peter established a fast on the Sabbath in preparation for the dispute with Simon Magus.

What is clear, however, is that canon 29 of the Synod of Laodicea demonstrates that, first, there were Christians resting on the Sabbath day in the second part of the fourth century, and who were doing so in recognition of the Creator’s own rest on the Sabbath at the end of Creation week. Second, August Neander rightly states that “In many districts, a punctual Jewish observance of the Sabbath must doubtless have become common: hence the council of Laodicea considered it necessary to order, that Christians should not celebrate this day after the Jewish manner, nor consider themselves bound to abstain from labour.”⁴⁰ Zeger-Bernard van Espen also writes that “among the Greeks the Sabbath was kept exactly as the Lord’s day except so far as the cessation of work was concerned.”⁴¹

Therefore, the controversy over the fasting on Sabbath, which was the point of debate at the Council in Trullo, is only the by-product of the deep conviction of the Christian church in the East during the first centuries of the Christian era that the Sabbath is the day of rest established by God at the time of the creation of the world. In addition to the evidence of canon 29, three key statements from the *Apostolic Constitutions* reinforce the statements of canon 55 concerning the Sabbath:

1. In the *Apostolic Constitutions* 2.59, the Sabbath is declared along with Sunday to be the day of church assemblies:

But assemble yourselves together every day, morning and evening, singing psalms and praying in the Lord’s house: in the morning saying the sixty-second Psalm, and in the evening the hundred and fortieth, but principally on the Sabbath-day. And of the day of our Lord’s resurrection, which is the Lord’s day, meet more diligently, sending praise to God that made the universe by Jesus, and sent him to us, and condescended to let him suffer, and raised Him from the dead. Otherwise what apology will he make to God who does not assemble on that day to hear the saving word concerning resurrection?⁴²

2. The *Apostolic Constitutions* states that on the Sabbath and on Sunday the slaves should rest from their labors and attend church with the rest of the Christians to listen to preaching from the Holy Scriptures:

Let the slaves work five days; but on the Sabbath day and the Lord’s day let them have leisure to go to church for instruction in piety. We have

³⁹Ibid., 14:148.

⁴⁰Neander, 401.

⁴¹“The Canons of the Synod of Laodicea,” *NPNT*² 14:133, notes by van Espen.

⁴²“Constitutions of the Holy Apostles,” *ANF* 7:422-423.

said that the Sabbath is on account of the creation, and the Lord's day of resurrection.⁴³

3. The *Apostolic Constitutions* declares that there should be no fasting on Sabbath, except for the Sabbath during which Jesus lay resting in the tomb, given that the Sabbath reminds one of the joy and delight of the creation of the world. If someone refuses to follow this decree, he should be excluded from the fellowship of the church.⁴⁴

Canon 56

We have likewise learned that in the regions of Armenia and in other places certain people eat eggs and cheese on the Sabbaths and Lord's days of the holy Lent. It seems good therefore that the whole Church of God which is in all the world should follow one rule and keep the fast perfectly, and as they abstain from everything which is killed, so also should they from eggs and cheese, which are the fruit and produce of those animals from which we abstain. But if any shall not observe this law, if they be clerics, let them be deposed; but if laymen, let them be cut off.⁴⁵

This canon demonstrates that the Christians in the East, although they did not fast on the Sabbath and on the Sundays of Lent, did, however, abstain from "everything which is killed . . . from eggs and cheese, which are the fruit and produce of those animals,"⁴⁶ from which they refrained during the fasting days. In writing this stipulation, the fathers of the Council in Trullo emphasized the need to remain faithful to canon 69 of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, which states:

If any bishop, or presbyter, or deacon, or reader, or singer, does not fast the fast of forty days, or the fourth day of the week, and the day of the Preparation, let him be deprived, except he be hindered by weakness of body. But if he be one of the laity, let him be suspended.⁴⁷

It is necessary, according to canon 56, that the whole universal church of God fast in the manner already established as it is expressed in the *Apostolic Constitutions*. This warning is especially directed toward the church of Armenia "and in other places," probably having in mind primarily the church in Rome.

In canon 56, one can easily detect the urgency of the fathers of the Council in Trullo to remain faithful to the teachings of the apostles,⁴⁸ to the earlier, original traditions, and to what ultimately leads to the teachings of the early church and Christ himself. As with the other canons, this canon

⁴³Ibid., 7:495.

⁴⁴Ibid., 7:504.

⁴⁵"The Canons of the Council in Trullo," *NPNF*² 14:391.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷"Constitutions of the Holy Apostles," *ANF* 7:504.

⁴⁸They believed that the teaching of the apostles was expressed in the *Apostolic Constitutions*.

also expresses the strong intent of the Council in Trullo to have some special regulations for Sabbath and Sunday.

Canon 89

The faithful spending the days of the Salutatory Passion in fasting, praying and compunction of heart, ought to fast until the midnight of the Great Sabbath: since the divine Evangelists, Matthew and Luke, have shewn us how late at night it was [that the resurrection took place], the one by using the words ὀψὲ σαββάτου, and the other by the words ὄρθρου βαθέος.⁴⁹

As we have stated earlier, there was only one Sabbath during the year when, according to the Council in Trullo, the faithful should fast: the Great Sabbath of Lent. The *Apostolic Constitutions* 7.23 describe this as the Sabbath of “our Lord’s burial, on which men ought to keep a fast, but not a festival. For inasmuch as the Creator was then under the earth, the sorrow for him is more forcible than the joy for the creation.”⁵⁰ Canon 89 stipulates that the fast on the Great Sabbath should end about the middle of the Holy Saturday night,⁵¹ since “the divine Evangelists, Matthew and Luke, have shewn us how late at night” the resurrection took place. At the hour of the Lord’s resurrection, after the days of fasting, contrition, and humbling of soul, the faithful should cease fasting and begin to rejoice.

Regardless of one’s position regarding the theology of fasting, one can appreciate the preoccupation of the fathers of the Council in Trullo to remain in harmony with the teachings of the apostolic tradition and to maintain an ecclesiastical unity in the observance of fasting. Moreover, it is clear that for them the Sabbath day, as well as Sunday, had to be set apart not just as a special day of nonfasting, but also as a day of worship on which the faithful should experience the joy of the creation and the resurrection of Jesus.

The Controversy Concerning the Church in Bulgaria

Long before the controversy concerning who would have the ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the church in Bulgaria in the ninth century, there were numerous quarrels between Eastern and Western Christianity.⁵² In 856, Theodora, empress of the Byzantine Empire,⁵³ retired from the court; and her underage son, Michael III, was appointed to succeed her under the

⁴⁹“The Canons of the Council in Trullo,” *NPNF*² 14:403, brackets original.

⁵⁰*Apostolic Constitutions*, *ANF* 7:469.

⁵¹Dura, 159.

⁵²See Jevsevije Popovic, *Opća Crkvena Istorija* (Sremski Karlovci: Srpska Manastirska Stamparija, 1912), 774-796. Frank Gavin, “Breach Between East and West,” in *An Outline of Christianity: The Story of Our Civilization*, 5 vols., ed. A. S. Peake and R. G. Parsons (London: Waverly, 1926), 2:189.

⁵³In 330, Constantine I established a second Roman capital at Byzantium (present-day Istanbul). When Rome fell in 476, the Byzantine Empire was founded on the remains of the once great Roman Empire with Constantinople as its capital.

protection of her brother, Bardas. However, Bardas and young Michael III allowed corruption and immorality to rule the court.⁵⁴ In response, the patriarch of Constantinople, Ignatius, refused communion to the young king, an act which infuriated Bardas and Michael. They removed Ignatius from his position and exiled him. Ignatius was succeeded by Photius, a layman, who was considered to be “the most learned scholar in the world . . . , the highly gifted man, distinguished as a philosopher in a generation, and displaying, as a theologian, qualities which bespeak genius.”⁵⁵

When news of the succession reached Pope Nicholas I (858-867), he sent two legates to investigate. When the legates arrived in Constantinople, they accepted gifts from Bardas’s supporters, and at the trial of Ignatius they took the side of Bardas. Thus Ignatius’s removal was confirmed.⁵⁶

However, in 862, Nicholas I reexamined the controversy and came to the conclusion that Ignatius was wrongly deposed. Because of this, he threatened Photius with excommunication, thereby further straining the relationship between Rome and Constantinople over the question of ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the church in Bulgaria.

The Bulgarians had been Christianized by missionaries from Constantinople and had received priests from the Eastern church. The Bulgarian king Bogoris (or Boris) had been baptized by Greek priests. However, Bogoris, upon further thought, decided that an ecclesiastical dependence on Constantinople might put the political independence of Bulgaria in danger. Therefore, he wrote to Rome, asking what has come to be called the “one hundred and five religious questions” and requesting the pope to send bishops to put the church in Bulgaria in order.⁵⁷ Nichols I honored Bogoris’s request, sending bishops who introduced the Latin form of worship and declared the church in Bulgaria to be the daughter of Rome. As a result, the Greek priests were humiliated and sent into exile to Constantinople. Distrust and aversion were transformed into open hostility.⁵⁸

In 867, the patriarch of Constantinople, Photius, wrote an encyclical to other patriarchs of the Eastern churches, accusing the Church of Rome of banditry and robbery of the church in Bulgaria, as well as accusing them of other abuses. The five abuses of Rome mentioned in this encyclical are:

1. observing Saturday as a fast day;
2. giving permission to the people to eat flesh food and animal products (cheese, milk, eggs) during the first week of Easter;
3. despising the priests from the East who live in a lawful marriage while their (Western) priests live in adultery and concubinage;

⁵⁴See Popovic, 778.

⁵⁵Gavin, 2:191.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Popovic, 780.

⁵⁸Ibid., 781; Gavin, 2:192. See also Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 158.

4. declining to give consent to the priests and bishops to conduct the sacrament of confirmation;
5. teaching that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father, but adding the phrase “and the son” (*Filioque*).⁵⁹

This encyclical, which is sometimes called the *Magna Carta* of Eastern Orthodoxy, expresses a forceful declaration of Constantinople’s independence from Rome and finishes with the statement of dethronement and excommunication of Pope Nicholas I. At least during this short period of time, it seemed that Photius won in his criticism of Rome because of the logic of his argument and the support he had from the clergy and people.⁶⁰

It is significant for the Saturday/Sunday debate that at this critical point in the history of the relationship between the Eastern and Western parts of Christianity, the first point of disagreement mentioned in this encyclical is fasting on Sabbath. It is also interesting to notice that in this document Sunday is not mentioned as the nonfasting day. Of course, there were other issues behind this encyclical, such as the power struggle between the two segments of Christianity and aspirations to control certain territories; nevertheless, the problem of fasting on Sabbath not only remained on the agenda, but was still *the* item on the agenda of disagreements in the ninth century.

This first excommunication, in which Pope Nicholas I was also dethroned in 867, would find its echo from the Latin side in the eleventh century. Was fasting on Sabbath still an issue in the later controversy between the two Christian churches?

The Fasting on Sabbath in the Great Schism of 1054

In 1042, Constantine Monomachos was inaugurated as the new king of the Byzantine Empire. One year later Michael Cerularius become patriarch of the Eastern church. These two men would become the central protagonists in defending the interests of the Eastern Orthodox Church in the Great Schism of 1054. Michael Cerularius was the real ruler not only of the church but also of the state, since soon after Constantine Monomachos became emperor, he suffered from paralysis and became a mere figurehead.⁶¹

In Rome, Pope Leo IX believed that he inherited absolute power over all Christian people and institutions from Peter himself.⁶² It seems that the Great Schism began with a letter written by Metropolitan Archbishop Leo of Achrida and Michael Cerularius to Bishop John of the church in Trani in southern Italy. However, the letter was intended not only for Bishop John, but also through him “to all the chief priests, and the priests of the Franks, and

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰See Gavin 2:193.

⁶¹Ibid. See also C. T. Marshall, “Schism, The Great,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (1987), 980.

⁶²Marshall, 981.

the monks, and the peoples, and to the most reverend pope himself.”⁶³ This open letter singles out two distinctive abuses of the Western church: it made a special attack on the practice of the Roman church of making the Sabbath a fast day, and the use of unleavened bread for the eucharist. It is interesting to notice that what was apparently the most controversial issue, that of the *Filioque*, is not mentioned in this letter.

Around the same time another learned theologian from the East, Nicetas Stethatos, wrote a booklet *Libellus Contra Latinos*, in which he accused the Roman church of breaking the rules of the *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* against fasting on the Sabbath, as well as of being disobedient to the Scriptures and the canons of other church councils, which had forbidden this practice.⁶⁴

To these two accusing documents from the East came two replies from the Western side. Pope Leo IX wrote an *apologia* for the Roman church to Michael Cerularius and Leo of Achrida, claiming that “he was the successor of the apostle Peter, that he was invested with supreme authority over the universal church, and that his word was law for the faithful to obey.”⁶⁵ A second defence supporting Pope Leo IX came from Cardinal Humbert, who wrote his *Responsio* to Nicetas Stethatos.⁶⁶

Moreover, Pope Leo IX decided early in 1054 to send a group of theologians to Constantinople to discuss further the contended issues. This group consisted of three papal legates: Cardinal Humbert; Frederic, deacon and chancellor of the Church of Rome; and Peter, archbishop of Amalfi. Upon their arrival the papal legates discussed the disputed issues with the patriarch, the emperor, and publicly with Nicetas Stethatos in the presence of the emperor, his court, and other persons of high rank in affairs of state and church.⁶⁷ Patriarch Michael Cerularius was offended by the letter brought to him by the legates and responded to the accusations concerning the Sabbath observance by saying: “For we are commanded also to honour the Sabbath equally with [Sunday] the Lord’s [day], and to keep [it] and not to work on it.”⁶⁸

After these unsuccessful discussions and other attempts to bring the Eastern church into submission to the Church of Rome, there occurred one of the most dramatic and most devastating events in the history of Christianity. On July 16, 1054, the Sabbath day, when preparations had been made for the liturgy on that day, the three papal legates entered the Church of St. Sophia and laid the bull of excommunication on the altar and walked away,

⁶³Michael Cerularius and Leo of Achrida, “Epistle to John of Trani,” in *Patrologia graecae*, ed. J.-P. Migne, 162 vols. (Paris, 1857-1886), 120:835-845. See also R. L. Odom, “The Sabbath in the Great Schism of 1054,” *AUSS* 1 (1963): 74-80.

⁶⁴Nicetas Stethatos, “*Libellus Contra Latinos*,” (PG 120:1011-1022).

⁶⁵Leo IX, “Epistle 100, to Michael Cerularius and Leo of Achrida,” in *Patrologia latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, 217 vols. (Paris, 1844-1864), 143:745-768. See also Odom, 75.

⁶⁶Humbert, “*Responsio*,” (PG 120:1021-1038).

⁶⁷Humbert, “*Breve et Succincta Commemoratio*,” (PL 143:1001, 1002).

⁶⁸Cerularius, “Letter I,” (PG 120:777, 7780).

toward Rome, shaking the dust from their feet. From that day on, the fracture between Constantinople and Rome has never been healed and the Church of Rome has considered Eastern Orthodox Christendom as excommunicated and heretical.

In his work, *Adversus Calumnias Graecorum* (*Against the Calumnies of the Greeks*), Cardinal Humbert wrote:

Therefore, in such observance of the Sabbath, where and in what way do we [Latins] have anything in common with the Jews? For they are idle and keep a holiday on the Sabbath, neither ploughing nor reaping, and by reason of custom do not work, but they hold a festivity and a dinner, and their menservants, maidservants, cattle, and beasts of burden rest. But we [Latins] observe none of these things, but we do every (sort of) work, as (we do) on the preceding five days, and we fast as we (are wont to) fast on the sixth day [Friday] next to it.

However, you [Greeks], if you do not judaize, tell (us) why do you have something in common with the Jews with the similar observance of the Sabbath? They certainly observe the Sabbath, and you observe (it); they dine, and always break the fast, on the Sabbath. In their forty day period they break the fast every Sabbath except one, and you [Greeks] in your forty day period break the fast every Sabbath except one. They [the Jews] have a twofold reason for observing the Sabbath, obviously by reason of the precept of Moses, and because the disciples were saddened and heavy (of heart) on this (Sabbath) day on account of the death of the Lord, whom they did not believe to be about to be resurrected. Wherefore, because you observe Sabbath with the Jews and with us Sunday, Lord's day, you appear by such observance to imitate the sect of the Nazarenes, who in this manner accept the Christianity that they might not give up Judaism.

But the Latin church, in compassionate regard for the Lord in (His) suffering and death, rejoice in (His) resurrection on the [Sunday] Lord's day, when concern much troubled the Jews as they were seeking to corrupt the guards of the sepulchre by means of money. Wherefore, we [Latins], holding unto the present time the apostolic tradition concerning the Sabbath, and desiring to hold (it) unto the end, are careful to subscribe to that which our ancient and venerable fathers declared and confirmed, among whom the most blessed Pope Sylvester, the spiritual father of the Emperor Constantine the Great, said, among other things:

“If every [Sunday] Lord's day on account of the [Lord's] resurrection is to be kept in the joy of Christians, then every Sabbath day [on account] of the burial is to be estimated in execration of the Jews. For all the disciples of the Lord had a lamentation on the Sabbath, bewailing the buried Lord, and gladness [prevailed] for the exulting Jews. But for the fasting apostles sadness reigned. Let us [Christians], therefore, be sad with the saddened on account of the burial of the Lord, if we would rejoice with them on account of the resurrection of the Lord. For it is not proper that we should observe on account of Jewish custom, the subversions of the foods and ceremonies of the Jews.”

These and similar things having been said by St. Sylvester, this tradition of the apostolic see did not please some of the Easterners, but they choose rather to observe the Sabbath with the Jews.⁶⁹

Cardinal Humbert argued that the Christians from the East celebrate the Sabbath in a similar way as do the Jews (“why you have something in common with the Jews in a similar observance of the Sabbath?”; “They certainly observe the Sabbath, and you observe [it]”). He also states that the Jews and by analogy the Christians from the East “are idle and keep a holiday on the Sabbath, neither ploughing nor reaping, and by the reason of custom do not work.” Further, he explains the theological reasons why the Jews and the Christians from the East observe the Sabbath: observing “the precept of Moses,” most likely meaning the revelation given to humanity through the prophet Moses in the Pentateuch and more specifically the Ten Commandments, and (2) the fasting of the Orthodox Church on only one Sabbath during the year—the day when Christ was in the tomb and “the disciples were saddened and heavy (of heart) . . . on account of the death of the Lord.” Cardinal Humbert concludes that since the Christians from the East “observe the Sabbath with the Jews” and the Lord’s Day (Sunday) with the Latin church, they must be designated as a sect.

At least equally important, if not more so, is the response given by Patriarch Michael Cerularius, in which he states that Christians are “commanded also to honour the Sabbath equally with the [Sunday] the Lord’s [day], and to keep [it] and not to work on it.” Consequently, Cerularius does not deny the accusations made by Humbert, but argues that the Christians are “commanded,” probably meaning by biblical revelation and the apostolic tradition, to honour, worship, and not work on the Sabbath, even as on Sunday.

Summary and Conclusions

The dispute between Rome and Constantinople on the fasting on Sabbath was one of the most controversial theological issues between the two segments of Christianity, lasting for more than one thousand years. Although sometimes this theological quarrel is blurred with cultural and nonbiblical elements, one cannot but appreciate the resolve of the fathers of the Council of Trullo, Patriarch Photius, and Patriarch Cerularius to remain faithful to the tradition of the apostles and church fathers.

Five canons of the Synod in Trullo emphasize, in one way or another (four directly), the necessity for the Christian church to remain faithful to the truth about not fasting on Sabbath as expressed in the *Apostolic Constitutions*. The Sabbath, along with Sunday, was a day when Christians should assemble, sing psalms, and pray in the house of the Lord. On Sabbath, the slaves should rest from their labors, attend church, and listen to the preaching from the Holy Scriptures with the rest of the Christians. Finally, there should be no

⁶⁹Humbert, “Adversus Calumnias Graecorum,” (PL 143:936, 937); cited from Odom, 77-79.

fasting on Sabbath (or Sunday), because the Sabbath reminds us of the joy and delight of the creation of the world.

In the dispute between the East and the West on the subject of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the Church in Bulgaria, Patriarch Photius in his encyclical against Rome mentioned, in the first place, the fasting on Sabbath, that is, the decision of the Roman church to reject and disregard the *Apostolic Constitutions* and to pronounce the Sabbath a day of fasting. It means that the struggle to understand the mystery of the Sabbath is still there in the ninth century.

Finally, in the eleventh century, after the Great Schism in 1054, Patriarch Cerularius made a tremendous statement that Christians are “commanded to honour the Sabbath . . . to keep [it] and not to work on it.”⁷⁰ Unfortunately, the Eastern Orthodox Church did not follow the words of Patriarch Michael Cerularius. In the centuries to follow, little by little, Eastern Orthodoxy distanced itself in its understanding of the Sabbath from the *Apostolic Constitutions*, from the fathers assembled at the Synod of Trullo, and from Patriarchs Photius and Cerularius, and came ever closer to the Church of Rome’s understanding of the Sabbath.

⁷⁰Cerularius (PG 120:777, 778).

DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

A MISSIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE PHENOMENON OF DUAL ALLEGIANCE IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH AMONG THE YORUBA PEOPLE OF NIGERIA

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Problem

Many Africans and members of other traditional societies of the world who still hold to a supernatural and spiritualistic worldview visit diviners, shamans, spiritualistic herbalists, and the traditional medicine men and women who use, for example, enchantments, divination, charms, and invocation of the spirit world. They engage in such practices for various reasons, which include the diagnosis and treatment of various ailments, both physical and psychological, which plague their clients; exhibit a quest to know the future through divination; and are familiar with the preparation of different kinds of charms and medicines. Christians, including some Yoruba Adventists, also engaged in such wisdom and divination in the missionary expeditions among the *Egba*, a subtribe in the nineteenth century.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Dual allegiance is a significant issue in the Seventh-day Adventist Church that needs a concerted effort to both detect and eliminate it from the practices of the believers. Critical contextualization is a process that may help to address the problem. A major emphasis is needed on the power of the gospel. Thus pastors and lay leaders of the church need to be trained in critical contextualization. The creation of a study center for African Traditional Religions and Worldviews will help the denomination to better understand how to contextualize mission to Africans and other people groups with similar worldviews.

**THE SABBATH IN THE PENTATEUCH: AN
EXEGETICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDY**

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Many studies have explored the seventh-day Sabbath in the Pentateuch from historical-critical, theological, and historical perspectives. However, systematic contextual exegesis and a close reading of the pentateuchal Sabbath texts have been neglected. This dissertation investigates literary features of these passages in their respective contexts and develops an integrated Sabbath theology from the viewpoint of the Pentateuch as a whole.

In chapter 1, an overview of literature on the biblical Sabbath introduces the topic and describes the methodology of the study. Chapters 2-5 explore specific contextual, stylistic, and linguistic elements of the pentateuchal Sabbath pericopes that contribute to the expression of their theological concepts. Chapter 2 analyzes the creation Sabbath (Gen 2:1-3). Chapter 3 investigates other narrative passages involving the Sabbath (Exod 16:1-36 and Num 15:32-36). Chapter 4 examines Sabbath laws (Exod 20:8-11; 23:12; 34:21; Deut 5:12-15). Chapter 5 focuses on the Sabbath in the context of the sanctuary (Exod 31:12-17; 35:2-3; Lev 23:3; 24:5-9; Num 28:9-10). In chapter 6, a summary of the various literary features of the Sabbath texts and their interrelatedness leads to a synthesis of theological aspects of the Sabbath. Chapter 7 presents the overall results of the study.

The Sabbath encapsulates and reveals God's presence in the world, regardless of its nature and condition. The Sabbath was introduced by divine cessation from work in order for holiness to enter the world for the benefit of all humanity. Holiness is the essence of the divine-human relationship, which enables human beings to fully become what they were created to be; i.e., in the image of the Creator. In its rhythmic recurrence, the Sabbath signifies the Creator's constant presence in the world and his care for it. Since the fall into sin, the Sabbath liberates people from oppressive regimes of man-made gods; it places them in proper relationships with each other; it relieves their attitude toward work in a society exhausted and stressed by hard labor; and it testifies to the sacred design in time and space whereby they can recognize and emulate the Maker of all. Thus the Sabbath is an important part of God's program for restoring the *imago Dei* in fallen human beings.

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CONCEPT OF
ATONEMENT IN THE WRITINGS OF
JOHN R. W. STOTT AND
ELLEN G. WHITE**

Name of researcher: Lawrence O. Oladini
Name of adviser: John T. Baldwin, Ph.D.
Date completed: July 2011

Introduction

The study examines two evangelical penal substitutionary theologies of atonement presented by John Stott and Ellen White. It adopts a descriptive and analytic approach for examining the respective atonement theologies of both authors. Chapter 1 introduces the purpose of the dissertation and the methodology adopted. Chapter 2 examines the different theories of atonement in Christian theology. Chapters 3 and 4 examine the respective atonement theologies of Stott and White. Chapter 5 is a comparative analysis of the concept of atonement in both authors, while chapter 6 summarizes the conclusions of the study.

Purpose

The purpose of the research is to describe, analyze, and compare the concepts of atonement as articulated in the theological writings of Stott and White. The study endeavors to explore the contrasting scope of atonement presented in the two respective theological systems. It also aims at discovering whether there are any evangelical theological bases for a rapprochement between Stott's atonement theology (which is centered on the cross) and that of White (which is likewise centered on the cross, but also includes the heavenly sanctuary ministry of Christ). Additionally, the research also aims at finding out the reasons for the differences in their atonement theologies, since they both subscribe to the penal substitutionary view. Another goal of the research is to discover any distinctive contributions that both theologies have made to the Christian theology of atonement.

Method

In order to bring out the similarities and differences between the two theologies of atonement, the study examines their respective assumptions, presuppositions, and methodology. Other relevant criteria used in the comparative study include the centrality of the cross, the achievement of the cross, atonement as substitution, the high-priestly ministry of Christ, and the scope of the atonement.

Conclusion

The conclusion of the study shows that the atonement theologies of Stott and White reveal a common commitment to two pillars of evangelicalism, namely,

the supreme authority of Scripture and the penal substitutionary view of atonement. However, critical differences between the two theologies in respect to the presuppositions in their doctrines of God in relation to atonement on the cross versus atonement in stages, the extent of the atonement, the issue of the revocability of justification, the cosmic-controversy theme, and the high-priestly ministry of Christ seem to account for the differences observed in the theologies. Overall, White's theology seems to be broader in its presentation of the scope of the atonement and seems to be more consistent with the scriptural evidence. It is hoped that the renewed interest in the judgment aspect of the atonement by some evangelical theologians in recent times may lead to a more sympathetic examination of the broader view of White on atonement in the wider evangelical theological arena.

BOOK REVIEWS

Abraham, William J, and James E. Kirby, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. xvii+761 pp. Hardcover, \$150.00.

A brief overview of earlier Wesley/Methodist publication enterprises serves to place the *Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies* in perspective. In the mid-twentieth century, Albert C. Outler of Southern Methodist University realized that while much attention had been paid to Wesley as a revivalist and spiritual leader, little attention had been paid to his theological writing. Consequently he edited *John Wesley*, a 516-page groundbreaking study of Wesley's theological work, which was published in 1964 in the *Oxford Library of Protestant Thought* series. At the outset it was questioned whether this was appropriate to *Protestant Thought*, but the study lit a candle and became the most frequently republished volume.

In 1960, led by Outler, then considered to be "the most influential Methodist theologian of the twentieth century"(595), Frank Baker, Robert Cushman, and a network of scholars in the United States and the United Kingdom organized the Wesley Works Editorial Project. Publication of the scholarly *Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* was commenced in the mid-1970s, and sixteen highly esteemed volumes of the proposed thirty-five have been published.

The *Handbook* marks the third great venture in the publication of Wesley/Methodist studies. The use of *Methodist* rather than *Wesley* in the title is significant. Whereas the two previous publishing ventures focus specifically on the work of the Wesleys, *Methodist* indicates a broader and more inclusive approach. Building upon the work of a large body of Methodist scholars over the past fifty years, the *Handbook*, composed of forty-three chapters organized in six sections, portrays a comprehensive view of Methodism in historical, contemporary, and global perspectives.

The first and longest section, Part 1, with eleven chapters, is devoted to a portrayal of the history of the development of Methodism from its early beginnings to a large international community of denominations. The concern at the outset is to provide a clear and balanced picture of the thought and work of the Wesley brothers and the foundation they laid for an expanding Christian community. It progresses to a portrayal of the establishment of Methodism in America under the leadership of Francis Asbury. Inspired by the vision "to reform the nation and spread scriptural holiness over these lands" (213), it grew rapidly. "By 1850, one third of all churchgoers in the United States were Methodists" (432). By the early twentieth century, Methodism had grown into "the largest cluster of Protestant denominations in North America with the largest mission force" (432). Sections on relationships with the United Brethren Church, the growth of African-American Methodism, and the rise of Pentecostalism are included in the *Handbook*.

The five chapters in Part 2 on "Ecclesial Forms and Structures" are devoted to the study of forms of ministry ranging from itinerancy to episcopacy, and to the "transformation of personal lives and the reconstruction of society" (200). The section on the status and functions of lay elders and their relationship to ordained ministers (270-273) is of interest to Seventh-day Adventists, inasmuch as this pattern of lay ministry was adopted by the emerging Adventist Church. Of similar interest is the section on the ordination of women (272-273). Helpful suggestions are made on prayer, on searching the Scriptures, and on the celebration of the Lord's Supper in chapter 16, "Means of Grace."

Part 3 is composed of five chapters on the fundamental dimensions of worship and the functions of the minister. The introductory chapter draws on the experience of Wesley, who "mined the liturgical riches of the early church for practices not found in Anglicanism," (298) and who developed the love feast as an experience of spiritual fellowship and joy in the Lord. The chapter on "Music and Hymnody" points to the significance of congregational singing as a heartwarming experience and as a means of implanting the fundamentals of belief in the mind. The section concludes with a chapter on the shape and development of Methodist preaching and an appeal for more consistent use of the whole Bible in sermon construction. Interestingly, three of these five chapters are written by women.

The six chapters in Part 4, "Spiritual Experiences, Evangelism, Mission, and Ecumenism," contain a wealth of practical material. The personal spiritual experience of the Wesleys and Phoebe Palmer is described, and attention is paid to the transforming power of a personal encounter with God and its significance in the rapid expansion of Methodism. Ways of witnessing are suggested in the context of "an emerging post-modern and post-Christendom culture in which there is widespread ignorance of the gospel story" (427). Commencing with Wesley's famous statement "I look upon all the world as my parish" and moving forward to the affirmation "The World Forever Our Parish" (432) at the 1990 conference, an excellent survey is presented of the great Methodist missionary movement. It covers some of its leaders and their aims and achievements, the global spread of Methodism, and selected contemporary challenges.

Wesley's contribution to Western theological thought stands out clearly in the nine essays on "Theology" in Part 5. The chapter titles read like an outline of the basic themes of systematic theology. Commencing with a chapter on "Scripture and Revelation," the "connection between knowledge and life" (489) is described and also the fourfold foundation of Wesley's theology: revelation, reason, tradition, and experience, subsequently called the Wesleyan quadrilateral. The Trinity is dealt with not merely as an academic doctrine, but as it relates to "all Christian faith, life and practice" (505). Chapters on original sin, the Wesleyan doctrine of redemptive

grace, Christology, Christian perfection, and predestination clearly define Methodist doctrine and the relationship between theological belief and the Christian life. The points at which Methodist Arminianism differs from classical Protestantism are also indicated. These include Wesley's rejection of the Augustinian doctrine of original guilt and the doctrine of predestination, his affirmation of freedom of the will, and the threefold doctrine of grace as prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying. The chapters on Christian perfection and assurance present Wesley's doctrine as a "robust vision of human happiness" (588).

The chapters in Part 6 on "Ethics and Politics" focus as much on the practical Christian life, "the essential connection between happiness and holiness" (635), as on broader church polity. The Wesleyan foundations of several of the major issues in moral theology are considered. The final chapter on "Methodism and Culture" commences with a quotation from Andrew Walls: "Expressions of the Christian religion are both heavily conditioned by their circumstances and powerfully capable of transforming their settings" (712). Bebbington transposes this into a threefold model and applies it to Methodism: (1) Methodists have "often adapted to their surrounding culture," (2) "have frequently challenged the stance of their contemporaries," and (3) "have repeatedly been a creative element in societies they have inhabited" (712-713). This epitomizes the essential character of Methodism, and this chapter serves to consolidate many of the issues in the history of Methodism portrayed in the *Handbook*.

The editors—William Abraham, Albert C. Outler Professor of Wesleyan Studies at Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University; and James Kirby, Professor of Church History at the same institution—have rendered a signal service in the publication of the *Handbook*. Never before has there been a single volume that grants the reader such extensive and detailed coverage of practically every dimension of Methodism from its inception under the Wesleys to its growth into one of the largest Protestant international families of denominations. The list of forty-four contributing authors reads like a Who's Who of contemporary Wesleyan/Methodist scholars, and a survey of the table of contents provides a conceptive view of almost every dimension of Methodism. Adventism arose in the later years of the Second Great Awakening, during which many of the revivalist leaders leaned strongly toward a theological Arminianism. A number of the early Adventist members and leaders had been Methodists and, not surprisingly, much about Adventism reflects its Methodist/Arminian theological and practical heritage. Thus *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies* can be useful in many ways in courses in which this heritage is examined.

There is a long list of "References" at the end of each chapter, and most have a shorter list titled "Suggested Reading." There is a single thirty-two-

page "Index" that provides access to practically every event, person, feature, and publication referenced in the *Handbook*.

Andrews University

RUSSELL L. STAPLES

Alter, Robert. *The Wisdom Books: Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes: A Translation with Commentary*. New York: W. W. Norton. xvii + 394 pp. Hardcover, \$35.00.

The author of a significant number of books, including *The Art of Biblical Poetry* and *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, Robert Alter currently serves as the Class of 1937 Professor of Hebrew and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley. The current work, *The Wisdom Books*, is the latest installment of his well-known series of original translations of OT books. The book is a hybrid between a traditional commentary and a translation. It differs from traditional commentaries in that it does not delve into technical issues such as literary structure and linguistic minutiae or issues such as date and provenance that are usually treated extensively in commentaries. Rather, it focuses on the theological and linguistic features of the biblical text that shape Alter's translation.

The introductions to each of the biblical books (Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes) begin with brief overviews and then proceed to a lively, readable translation of each of the books that attempts to retain as nearly as possible the poetic nature of the books, while remaining faithful to the Hebrew text. Along with the translation, Alter provides running commentary, though it is not verse-by-verse as is found in most modern commentaries. Instead, he comments on words and phrases that he has translated differently from the norm or that have particular interest to the literary and theological flow of the book. He often points to inter- and intratextual parallels that help the reader to understand the greater context of OT wisdom literature.

Alter relies primarily on his own expertise in Biblical Hebrew, though he notes in the introduction that it has been checked for form and content by scholars in the field. The book lacks footnotes and has only a brief bibliography, both of which would have been beneficial for the reader who would like to explore differing opinions or to know who influenced Alter. He does, however, refer to various scholars from time to time in the commentary and notes the work of Michael V. Fox in the introduction to the section on Proverbs.

The primary strength of this work is that it gives readers a fresh, accurate translation of OT wisdom literature. Alter truly is a master at translation, which this work demonstrates well. The commentary is also well done. While it leaves many things unsaid that a traditional commentary would normally cover, it brings to light significant aspects of the language and theology of the texts. For example, Alter interprets Job as a frame story (chaps. 1-2, and 42)

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that has been filled in with folklore and makes significant use of mythological language.

Alter has brilliantly succeeded in his goal of producing a lively, readable translation of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. I highly recommend this book to any reader who wishes to understand the overarching theological themes of these books and to read a translation that brings those themes to light. Alter manages to avoid overly technical language, and his discussion far outweighs any shortcomings.

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RUSSELL L. MEEK

Beentjes, Pancratius C. *Tradition and Transformation in the Books of Chronicles*, Studia Semitica Neerlandica 52. Leiden: Brill, 2008, xiii + 211 pp. Cloth, \$154.00.

Over the past few decades, the Book of Chronicles, a historical work long neglected and even dismissed by some biblical scholars, has been the recipient of a resurgence of scholarly interest and activity. This renewed attention has, in turn, resulted in a rise in the number of publications dedicated to this important source of biblical history (for a recent survey of this development, see the discussion by Sarah Japhet, *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah: Collected Studies on the Restoration Period* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006], 399-415; see esp. the cited references in n. 1). The reasoning behind this renewed scholarly awareness is based in part upon an ongoing reevaluation of the Chronicler and his merit as a historian, which has slowly yet steadily shifted scholarship toward a more positive appraisal of his work. The question at the heart of the debate regards the Chronicler's use of older sources. Specifically, what, if any, early (pre-exilic) materials did the Chronicler possess and how faithful was he to their content when utilizing them? Despite the Chronicler's extensive use of source citations throughout his work, many scholars remain highly skeptical regarding several issues: the veracity of additional information the Chronicler provides that is not found in Samuel-Kings; the long length of time spanning the events the Chronicler records and his own lifetime, which must be dated at some time during the postexilic (Persian) period; and the Chronicler's theological *tendenz* that many scholars believe led him to modify, embellish, or even create accounts to suit his theological viewpoint. Of the Chronicler's theological views, his emphasis upon a theology of immediate retribution is perhaps the most recognizable.

While Pancratius C. Beentjes, the author of the volume under review, is well aware of these issues, he generally avoids focusing on issues of historicity, but rather devotes his attention to the Chronicler's literary style, message, and theology. Only in chapter 7, where he presents the issue of the Chronicler's

that has been filled in with folklore and makes significant use of mythological language.

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view of Israel's history, does the author treat historical matters in detail. While his text-based studies have much value, the author's reluctance to consider historical issues (e.g., 62) in his evaluations, as well as a failure to utilize other historical and archaeological sources to either defend or assail the historical reliability of Chronicles, weakens the direction and potential impact of his conclusions.

Beentjes's book is the latest collection of *kleine schriften* by a scholar engaged in Chronicles research and follows similar collected studies by E. Ben Zvi (*History, Literature and Theology in the Book of Chronicles* [London: Equinox, 2006]); and I. Kalimi (*An Ancient Israelite Historian: Studies in the Chronicler, His Time, Place and Writing*, *Studia Semitica Neerlandica* 46 [Assen: Van Gorcum, 2005]). Beentjes's volume of collected studies is especially welcome since it brings together articles that were scattered previously among some rather obscure and difficult-to-obtain European journals and edited works. The book is published in the *Studia Semitica Neerlandica* series, which recently transferred from the Van Gorcum to the Brill imprint. Consequently, it also inherited an excessively high purchase price. Unfortunately, numerous editorial oversights (see below) detract from the book's otherwise attractive format and first-rate production quality.

Beentjes provides a well-written and thoughtful introduction that summarizes the various issues surrounding Chronicles and generally states his position. He also includes a helpful discussion on defining the genre of Chronicles. However, while the author rejects various attempts to label the work as either a *midrash*, an interpretation (*die Auslegung*), or as a rewritten Bible, he fails to propose his own alternative. The final lines of this section (6) end with two awkwardly written and contradictory clauses and lack any concluding statement or closing remark, an error that should have been rectified during the editorial process.

The book is divided into two parts. The first six chapters are textual studies. Topics are the genealogies (1 Chronicles 1–5) and two episodes in David's reign (1 Chronicles 17 and 21), which are revisited in chapter 7. Using inner-biblical interpretation, 2 Chronicles 20, in which Jehoshaphat's royal prayer becomes a national lament, Beentjes dismisses von Rad's characterization of vv. 14–17 as a Levitical sermon and draws a parallel between v. 20 and Exodus 14. However, he fails to integrate more recent treatments of this text in his revision, such as discussions by R. W. Klein ("Reflection on Historiography in the Account of Jehoshaphat," in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*, ed. D. P. Wright, D. N. Freedman, and A. Hurvitz [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995], 643–657); and A. F. Rainey ("Mesha's Attempt to Invade Judah [2 Chron. 20]," in *Studies in Historical Geography and Biblical Historiography Presented to Zecharia Kallai*, ed. G. Galil and M. Weinfeld [Leiden: Brill, 2000], 174–176) on its historicity, as well as the perceptive observations by G. N.

Knoppers (“Jerusalem at War in Chronicles,” in *Zion, City of Our God*, ed. R. S. Hess and G. J. Wenham [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 57-76) on the critical function of the Temple and Jehoshaphat’s specific instructions during the crisis. Beentjes also treats the account of Uzziah’s leprosy (2 Chronicles 26) and Isaiah’s role in Chronicles.

The final six chapters address topical studies such as the Chronicler’s view of Israel’s earlier history, a modified form of a recent paper (“Israel’s Earlier History as Presented in the Book of Chronicles,” in *Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook 2006: History and Identity: How Israel’s Later Authors Viewed Its Earlier History*, ed. N. Calduch-Benages, J. Liesen, and N. Calduch-Benages [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006], 57-75), in which Beentjes argues that Jerusalem and the Temple constitute the overriding purpose of Chronicles, as well as give evidence for a certain chronistic interpretation of selected past events (forgotten traditions) by their vocabulary and presentation. Notable here (108) is an inverted reflection of Israel’s enemies listed in 2 Chron 20:10, which the Chronicler possibly derived from Deuteronomy 2. Repeatedly citing Japhet’s comments on this issue, Beentjes concludes (112-113) that “There is no doubt that the author of Chronicles presents history to convey a certain interpretation of the events.” Thus the Chronicler shapes and interprets history rather than invents it. Other chapters deal with prophets, psalms and prayers, and war narratives in the book of Chronicles.

The final study addresses the meaning of the verb *שׁוּר* in Chronicles. An excellent bibliography and set of indices completes the book. Notations at the beginning of most chapters provide the reader with the place and date of its original publication. To his credit, Beentjes updated, modified, or otherwise revised most of his papers. However, the decision not to update his 1996 essay, “Jerusalem: The Very Centre of all the Kingdoms of the Earth” (appearing here as chap. 8), is regrettable, since several relevant studies have appeared in the interim. These include important papers by M. J. Selman (“Jerusalem in Chronicles,” in *Zion, City of Our God*, ed. R. S. Hess and G. J. Wenham [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 43-56); I. Kalimi (“The Capture of Jerusalem in the Chronistic History,” *V/T* 52 [2002]: 66-79; and “Jerusalem—The Divine City: The Representation of Jerusalem in Chronicles Compared with Earlier and Later Jewish Compositions,” in *The Chronicler as Theologian: Essay in Honor of Ralph W. Klein*, ed. M. P. Graham, S. L. McKenzie, and G. N. Knoppers, JSOTSup 371 [London: T. & T. Clark, 2003]); G. N. Knoppers (“The City YHWH Has Chosen?: The Chronicler’s Promotion of Jerusalem in Light of Recent Archaeology,” in *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period*, ed. A. G. Vaughn and A. E. Killebrew [Atlanta: SBL, 2003], 307-326); W. M. Schniedewind (“Jerusalem, the Late Judahite Monarchy, and the Composition of the Biblical Texts,” in *ibid.*; and, especially, Sara Japhet (“The Wall of Jerusalem from a Double Perspective: Kings versus Chronicles,” in *Essays on Ancient Israel in Its Near Eastern Context:*

A Tribute to Nadav Na'aman, ed. Y. Amit, E. Ben Zvi, I. Finkelstein, and O. Lipschits [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006], 205-219). Integrating these and other recent studies regarding Jerusalem as depicted in Chronicles would have served to strengthen his already fine study.

A number of typos and awkward sentences mar the book. Since one assumes that English is not the writer's first language, he should not shoulder the blame for the numerous grammatical mistakes and spelling errors. Rather, they betray substandard editorial work. Examples include: "bij" for "by" (61); "M. Oehming" for "M. Oeming" (63); the reference to n. 7 on p. 72 should actually be to n. 8; "helpes" for "helps" (73); "modelled" for "modeled" (76); "Read Sea" for "Red (or Reed) Sea" (77); "including" for "includng"; and "I like to thank" should state, "I would like to thank" (86). Nevertheless, Beentjes has provided a fine volume of carefully researched articles that represents a worthy, if not highly original, contribution to the ongoing research on Chronicles. A festschrift honoring his work on Ben Sira and Chronicles is forthcoming this year (J. Corley and H. Van Grol, eds., *Rewriting Biblical History: Essays on Chronicles and Ben Sira in Honour of Pancratius C. Beentjes*, Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies 7 [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 2011]). It is hoped that his two-volume commentary on Chronicles (hitherto available only in Dutch) will also appear in an English edition.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

JEFF HUDON

Doukhan, Lilianne. *In Tune with God*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2010. 301 pp. Hardcover, \$24.99.

As a musically voracious teenager in the 1970s with a strong interest in my faith, I read everything I could find published by the church on music. However, the general tenor of most of it bothered me, condemning as it did entire genres of music as evil—insidiously inflicting spiritual, moral, and even physical harm on all who dared listen. In 1983, as a capstone project for the Honors program at Walla Walla College, I wrote a paper titled "A History of Appropriateness in Protestant Church Music." What I discovered was that controversy over church music has been brewing, and in many cases boiling over, for hundreds of years. The project gave me an even greater sense that music's reputation had been unjustly besmirched by many church writers, and left me with an abiding interest in books on music, the mind, and spirit. Hence, I was eager to read Lilianne Doukhan's new book, *In Tune with God*. I was delighted to find the book impeccably researched, carefully thought out, and clearly and convincingly written. While the entire book has much to recommend it, I will focus on Doukhan's efforts to restore music's good name. Doukhan brings a wealth of experience from her scholarship as

A Tribute to Nadav Na'aman, ed. Y. Amit, E. Ben Zvi, I. Finkelstein, and O. Lipschits [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006], 205-219). Integrating these and other recent studies regarding Jerusalem as depicted in Chronicles would have served to strengthen his already fine study.

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As a musically voracious teenager in the 1970s with a strong interest in my faith, I read everything I could find published by the church on music. However, the general tenor of most of it bothered me, condemning as it did entire genres of music as evil—insidiously inflicting spiritual, moral, and even physical harm on all who dared listen. In 1983, as a capstone project for the Honors program at Walla Walla College, I wrote a paper titled "A History of Appropriateness in Protestant Church Music." What I discovered was that controversy over church music has been brewing, and in many cases boiling over, for hundreds of years. The project gave me an even greater sense that music's reputation had been unjustly besmirched by many church writers, and left me with an abiding interest in books on music, the mind, and spirit. Hence, I was eager to read Lilianne Doukhan's new book, *In Tune with God*. I was delighted to find the book impeccably researched, carefully thought out, and clearly and convincingly written. While the entire book has much to recommend it, I will focus on Doukhan's efforts to restore music's good name. Doukhan brings a wealth of experience from her scholarship as

a pianist, associate professor of music history and musicology at Andrews University, and her experience as a well-traveled citizen of the world.

A cardinal argument made by earlier writers is that certain rhythms, chords, and even entire genres of popular music are at best “damaged goods” and more likely simply evil. This notion always struck me as somehow Gnostic in its equating a part of the created order with evil. During the Middle Ages, the church adamantly denounced the interval of the tritone (three whole steps) as *diabolus en musica*—“the Devil in the music”—and forbade its use. With time, this prohibition faded, and today every hymn on every page of every Christian hymnal contains tritones. In spite of many similar prohibitions that have eventually wilted, commentators have continued to rail against the “evils” of various instruments and styles. Doukhan incisively traces this objection back to the Greek doctrine of “ethos” and the Platonic view of the spiritual world as the only true reality. Music was held to be a sign of this spiritual reality and was, therefore, able to effect spiritual and emotional changes in listeners. Musical scales believed to upset listeners’ emotional equilibriums were banned by the Greeks (47-52).

Doukhan contrasts this philosophy with the biblical perspective, in which the power to transform lives belongs not to created objects or elements, but to the Holy Spirit (53). Unlike the Greeks who conceived of good and evil as residing in concepts such as harmony and dissonance, Bible writers describe good and evil as obedience or disobedience to the law of God (54, cf. Mark 7:15). When it comes to music, however, church leaders have tended and continue to side with Plato and Aristotle rather than Jesus and Paul.

So is Doukhan saying that music is neutral, completely powerless? Certainly not. “The real power of music lies in its ability to transform a given situation, namely, to intensify, to beautify, to stimulate, to create associations, and to build community” (62). In my experience, and perhaps Doukhan’s as well, it is the associative phenomenon that is most powerful in shaping human response to music. We all have specific associations with individual pieces of music: for me, *Day is Dying in the West* will forever conjure up vivid images of Sabbath vespers in the Walla Walla College Church, while *A Bicycle Built for Two* reminds me of my son as a three year old (he learned to sing it at daycare!). Many of us have shared associations. Elgar’s “*Pomp and Circumstance*,” *March No. 1* reminds us of countless graduations, while Tchaikovsky’s *1812 Overture* evokes Fourth of July fireworks. Entire styles of music have been linked in this fashion to various activities; for many in my grandparents’ and parents’ generations, jazz was and always will be the music of bars and brothels, and, therefore, unacceptable for Christian enjoyment. For nearly all of my students, though, it’s just another style to be explored and enjoyed. All of us, however, must recognize that these associations can be personally intense for some. In addition, it must be remembered by those holding personal views on what certain styles mean that even widely held

communal associations may change over time as the circumstances previously linked with a piece or a style change. With concerted effort, associations may even be deliberately changed. Because of these factors, all of us must think and act charitably toward those with different associative constructs than our own. Doukhan aptly cites 1 Corinthians 8 in this regard, suggesting that substituting music-related terms for food-related ones is helpful for seeing the relevant application (122-123).

Having established that music or any of its constituent elements have no inherent moral qualities, but can be marshaled to reinforce either good or evil, Doukhan cites the varied efforts of church leaders through the ages to advance the gospel through music. She finds the most positive, energetic example in the ministry of Martin Luther. Luther used music for evangelism, worship, and community-building through his many chorales. Based almost entirely on pre-existing musical materials (only three of more than his nearly two-hundred compositions are original in both tune and text), Luther's chorales are predominantly upbeat, rhythmic, and joyous, with more than twenty-five percent containing syncopation (174). According to Doukhan, Luther had no concept of sacred or secular music—all music was potentially useful in spreading the gospel (181-182). While he retooled contemporary popular music for worship, he also vigorously held onto earlier church music, wanting to maintain connection with the church of the past.

In the final section of the book, Doukhan addresses the current state of church music, and offers helpful suggestions for churches wishing to maintain (or regain) a vibrant musical ministry. While much of the book lays the groundwork for accepting contemporary popular styles within the worship service, Doukhan is clear that she, like Luther, sees tremendous value in retaining traditional styles. Her experience resonates with my own in that while students enjoy and are blessed by contemporary worship music they do not want traditional music to be excluded. Too often those in charge of planning services, in a desire to be relevant, focus exclusively on contemporary styles. However, in their quest to break free from the “monotony” of traditional church music, they simply substitute one set of monotony for another. A blended service will meet the eclectic tastes of most youth, and give many older members opportunities to be gracious.

Doukhan examines several challenges for utilizing contemporary worship music, including a frequent lack of musical training, amateurish technological support, an ease of slipping into entertainment mode, the possibility of emotional manipulation, and the difficulty of keeping one's attitude and ego in check. She also discusses the challenge of finding pieces that are “truthful”; i.e., music containing lyrics that not only have “theological correctness, but [also] depth, meaningfulness, directness, and poetic quality,” and music that is “well articulated, flowing freely, and able to carry a message clearly” (227, 229). The discrimination needed for making good choices is often in short

supply, but is vital if church music of any style is to be truly meaningful. This sifting must be done whenever one deals with new music—there are far less gems available in new music as it has not yet had time to be factored out on the basis of quality. This is why, at least in part, that contemporary worship music often pales drastically in comparison with established hymns. The hymnal is a collection of gems that have stood the test of time. There have, undoubtedly, been hundreds of hymns every bit as hackneyed as that praise chorus you cannot stand, but thankfully they have been swept up in history's dustbin. It will take years for a serious repertory of "contemporary" worship music to be amassed, and by that time, there will be a new genre pressing for inclusion.

In Tune with God is a must-read for those even remotely involved in planning or presenting worship services, and for anyone wishing to learn more about the sometimes-turbulent saga of church music. We all owe Lillian Doukhan a debt of gratitude.

Southern Adventist University

KEN PARSONS

Doukhan, Lillian. *In Tune with God*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2010. 301 pp. Hardcover, \$24.99.

I have argued that at the heart of the worship and music wars is the matter of culture. At the outset of her work, Lillian Doukhan, Associate Professor of Music at Andrews University, recognizes the cultural nature of music, stating unequivocally that true artists speak to their culture and have something to say to their society: "Through their works composers celebrate life, comment on life, express their view of life, draw attention to issues in society, protest, criticize, accuse, stir awareness and consciousness, or drive home a reality" (18). Music, worship, and, indeed, all of life is cultural. Therefore, a person's appreciation of consonance and dissonance is subjectively based upon one's cultural comfort zone. The harmonic language that Westerners find so appealing took centuries to evolve to the satisfactory familiar perspective from which we argue for our music as superior *vis-à-vis* other cultural music or other contemporary nonclassical music.

Doukhan notes that "A given melodic turn, a particular chord progression, a rhythmic pattern, or a specific instrument may evoke a number of different meanings" (33). The reason for this is because music is an acquired experience. "Music does not happen in a vacuum but is intimately tied with, and carried by, a given culture or society" (38). Context and education give music its meaning. "There is no universal way music is appreciated in different cultural settings" (39; cf. 58). She gives a number of good examples of this statement of fact. The illustration I regularly use is that of Bob Marley's first visit to Russia. After performing his first number, the audience politely applauded as they would after hearing a Rachmaninoff piano concerto. Marley responded

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by telling the audience that this was not the way to respond to reggae. He had to educate them on how to move and gyrate to the rhythm and sounds. They had to be educated into Jamaican culture.

Doukhan debunks the concept that elements of music such as beat, rhythm, and syncopation are evil in themselves. Nor are they evil because their origins are in the spirit world of Africa. Such postulations are based on “misinformation, ignorance, or simply prejudice” (23). She painstakingly demonstrates both the neutrality of these elements as well as their universality. For example, the fact that syncopation is a basic rhythmic feature of Western European music since the Middle Ages was an enlightening discovery. It was imported to Louisiana by early French settlers. Africans incorporated this feature into their music, with jazz being the resultant hybrid.

Doukhan’s arguments and illustrations are an important positive contribution to the worship wars. The issues at stake have nothing to do with biblical orthodoxy or soteriological morality. It is all about culture. She also rightly recognizes that the biblical perspective on worship addresses human beings as a whole: the body, emotions, and mind. She strongly urges for a balance to be struck between the cognitive and the emotive elements of music. “Addressing both mind and heart is still essential for today’s worship,” she writes (102). Very little, however, is said about the body, and when it is addressed (at least in one place), it is identified as “our senses” (37). I wish to argue that the “body” should not only refer to the senses, but also to the physical elements. The fear of dancing as a part of the worship experience has led to denigrating the use and movement of the body in worship. This, of course, arises out of the Greek dichotomy of the body and soul—the former being evil and in need of suppression, the latter good and in need of elevation. Holistic worship, however, must incorporate the physical. Many cultures, such as the African cultures, use bodily movements as worshipful sacrifices to God. Just as the music prior to the sermon sets the heart in tune to hear a cognitive sermon, so music can set the pace for a physical expression of worship.

The issue of sacred versus secular is an issue of wholeness, Doukhan proposes. She notes that “There is no such thing as inherently sacred music, neither by the use of a particular instrument or genre nor by a given musical style. Our interpretation of music as sacred is also a learned experience” (44). It is the religious community that “needs to determine which musical language belongs to *its own cultural setting*, and which is appropriate to express the values attached to the sacred and supernatural as they are understood within that given culture or subculture” (46). I agree strongly with her on this point. Again, I draw on the Jamaican context: Marley and reggae music, which were anathema to most devout Christians just a few decades (or maybe just a few years) ago, have now found pride of place in the Anglican hymnal, resulting in “One love!/. . . Let’s get together and feel all right”

now recognized as a Christian hymn, sung with luster and danced with vibrancy on many a Sunday morning in Church of England sanctuaries across the nation!

Doukhan is correct that we must “distinguish between the aesthetic (spiritual) experience and a religious experience; they are not equivalent” (48). She is also correct in rejecting the Platonic dichotomy between the spiritual and material world in terms of good and bad. However, I would not limit the spiritual to the realm of the aesthetic. Spiritual is the overarching concept. The opposite of spiritual is not material or secular. The antonym is “profane.” There can be sacred versus secular—that is, something set apart for a special purpose versus something for general use; the sacred or the religious can be profane or it can be spiritual. The same is true for the secular. The focus of the spiritual is the triune God, while the center of the profane is self. For example, when Marley wrote “One Love” it was out of a deep Rastafarian religious experience. However, the popular (what some would call “secular”) society took it over and made it profane in the self-centered culture of drugs and sex. The religious world has now rebaptized it and filled it with its original alterocentric spirituality—an other-centeredness with its center in Jesus Christ.

All music can be appropriately performed (which is not the best word because worship is not a performance, as Doukhan correctly argues) in the public worship service if Christ is at the center. That is what makes it “spiritual.” Whether it comes originally from nonreligious or religious settings, music must be Christocentric for it to be acceptable for the worship experience. In this vein, I would suggest that her historical (and theological?) discussion of *contrafacta* (the technique of borrowing entire tunes and songs from secular or religious traditions without substantially changing the music) is worth the price of the book. This excellent discussion, beginning on p. 166, but highlighted throughout the work, should put to rest once and for all the arguments of those who see worldly influences creeping into the church when so-called secular music is incorporated into the worship liturgy.

Doukhan’s timid opposition to clapping in church (96) is a classic example of the cultural nature of worship. She notes that “people would never think to clap after a prayer.” In African (American) culture, all expressions are accepted if they come from the soul. I have often experienced much clapping, moaning, shouting, and rich and soft amens during a powerful prayer. As I visit churches today, I find that clapping has replaced the traditional amen and/or the nonresponse of more Eurocentric congregations. Clapping as a response is not only done after the musical selection, but it is the response of choice throughout the entire service, especially during a heart-touching sermon.

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Doukhan, Lilianne. *In Tune with God*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2010. 301 pp. Hardcover, \$24.99.

Lilianne Doukhan, Associate Professor of Music at Andrews University, summarizes the goal of her book as a defense of music. In particular, her work focuses on music within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She writes for an Adventist audience and determines to bring light rather than heat to the topic, by using objective criteria to formulate balanced opinions. The sources of objective data for her reside in the Scriptures, the writings of Ellen White (one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, whose writings continue to play a key role in church life), and the lessons of history. She determines to give not only a reasoned discussion of the topic, but also to provide practical lessons for the church.

The book is divided into five parts, which address the musical experience, music in the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen White, the church wrestling with music, the contemporary challenge, and music ministry within the church. Two brief appendices are included: guidelines for worship leaders, and a sample worship survey.

In Part 1, Doukhan sets forth the basic component parts of music—melody, harmony, and rhythm—describing the characteristics of each in turn, with emphasis on the concept of balance. She goes on to describe the purpose of sacred music in terms of conveying theology and communicating by touching the heart and mind. She sees sacred music as defined within particular cultural settings (the human side of the equation), while finding that it is pleasing to God when directed toward him (the divine side of the equation).

Doukhan does not see any style or type of music as inherently right or wrong, good or bad. She supports this premise by describing the Greek concept of *ethos*, which was centered on the idea of balance and average. For the Greeks, “Behavior that did not feature harmony, balance, and measure were [*sic*] considered to be evil” (51). The soul could be changed by music through its affinity to the harmonies and rhythms. Doukhan contrasts this with a biblical concept of the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. For her, the Greek idea smacks of idolatry, placing a certain magical quality of transformation within the music itself. Thus where some speak of certain types of music as bad or evil, Doukhan suggests a much more complex means whereby music affects people within a particular cultural setting, based upon associations made between the music and other elements of communication. She purports that music’s power resides in its ability to intensify, beautify, stimulate, and empower communication. Its association with a message makes that message more powerfully present to the human being.

On a practical level, Doukhan goes on to give six practical guidelines for creating a responsible musical experience: we should understand our natural

preferences, recognize that musical styles come with cultural baggage, realize that music can affect our emotional and physical well-being, listen actively to create a “musical conscience,” be honest about our musical expectations, and create musical experiences that intensify high moral standards. She draws from these guidelines a twofold lesson—we should take responsibility for our musical choices and the effect they have on us and others, and we should be tolerant of where other people come from in their musical journey.

In Part 2, Doukhan sets forth her philosophy of music based on her reading of Scripture and the writings of Ellen White. She notes that the Bible does not give direct instruction in a philosophy or theology of music. However, she sees certain principles set forth in events in Scripture that illustrate that music is both for God and for people. One of the central principles she enunciates in this section is beauty. Others include mental, spiritual, and social growth. Music done for the Lord is focused only on him. Doukhan questions whether music in Adventist Churches has become more focused on the performer and performance than on God. She calls for a balanced emphasis on joy and reverence in focusing music on God. The musician is to remember that he or she is playing or singing for God, to please God. Two central character traits of God need equal emphasis: God is the transcendent Creator, and he is the immanent Redeemer. Through focus on these characteristics, she maintains that any musical style can be transformed into worship music.

Doukhan describes music within the ancient temple services of Israel. She notes the similarities and distinctions between Israelite and pagan use of musical instruments, describing how instruments were used in different ways. She concludes that no instruments are sacred or evil by nature. It is the use made of them that associates them with good or evil.

In regard to music being for people, Doukhan notes that music within the church cannot be a simple matter of personal preference because it is a collective experience of the community of faith. Too many times arguments over music occur on the horizontal level—my preferences versus yours. She calls for a reorientation of the discussion to the vertical level—how this or that music can contribute to the glory of God. She has a nuanced discussion of relating to the preferences of others in regard to musical tastes. On the basis of concern for the “weaker brother” (Romans 14), she calls for a balanced approach by not denying one person’s feelings, while not allowing them to hijack the entire congregation.

Part 3 deals with the church’s wrestling with issues regarding appropriate music for worship. Here she reviews the history of music in the church from NT times, but with a major focus on Martin Luther’s use of *contrafacta* in utilizing common secular tunes to express and teach the gospel to church members. Luther’s idea was to make the gospel relevant and memorable to people in their everyday lives. Doukhan describes Luther’s concepts at some length. Surprisingly, she follows this with a brief description of John Calvin’s

and other Reformers' contrasting viewpoints. She sees Calvin's restraint regarding music as reflective of his deep distrust of society, resulting in his theology of the elect.

In a brief concluding chapter in this section, Doukhan describes in rapid-fire style the shifts and changes that have taken place in both society and the church since the time of the Reformation. On the church side, numerous heirs of the Reformation followed in the footsteps of Luther to use *contrafacta* for bringing the gospel to the masses. At the same time, events such as the French Revolution and the rise of Romanticism shifted the focus of society to the individual expression of the true self and a fascination with the mystery and spiritual qualities of the past. Church music divided into two streams: high church, with a focus on the vertical and classical music; and low church, with a focus on the human aspects of worship, popular music, and the horizontal.

In Part 4, Doukhan grapples with the contemporary scene in church music, illustrating the distinctions between Contemporary Christian Music and Contemporary Worship Music. The former is that which is traditionally sung by performing Christian artists and contains more complex instrumentation and arrangements. The later is illustrated more in the praise songs sung by a congregation. Contemporary Worship Music has simpler melodies and arrangements for ease of group singing. She describes both the strengths and challenges of Christian Worship Music. On the positive side, its lyrics often come straight from Scripture; it contains unpredictability, which fosters more attention and participation; and its repetitive lyrics help teach the words easily. On the negative side, it can have shallow lyrics and a focus on sentimentality. Because it is a new genre, many songs are produced, some of which will not pass the test of time, which older styles have already gone through.

Doukhan provides a useful and nuanced discussion of harmony between the message of the text and the music, standards of music performance, and the use of new technologies in musical presentation, including a thoughtful discussion about the use of sound tracks in solo presentations.

At the conclusion of this section, Doukhan discusses rock music in the church. She describes it not simply as a musical style, but as a cultural phenomenon that is characterized by using music and a set of dress and performance patterns to protest against societal norms. She also describes the musical elements of rock as "meter and rhythm characterized by a constant tension relationship, and electronic enhancement and manipulation of instrumental and vocal sounds" (244). She discovers its roots in the turbulent days of the 1960s and 1970s. The goal of rock musicians was to heighten the experience of human emotion and to probe more deeply the human psyche. She notes the sharp contrast between such music in general and Christian lifestyle, pointing to the way that the experience of rock culture and music can take the place of God in the life. However, she proposes that not all rock music goes to these extremes and calls for a balanced approach toward more

subdued forms. She believes that the musical elements still require calling such music “rock,” but maintains that it does not necessarily work against societal values. She sees this type of music fitting “the energy and excitement of youth” (247). It serves as a fitting representation of our fast and aggressive urban culture. Nevertheless, she strongly cautions about using such music for worship. Not only are many of the values of this music quite at odds with the Christian life, but also it requires a very talented musician to bring this type of music appropriately into a worship setting.

In Part 5, Doukhan addresses music ministry within the Adventist Church. From years of experience in church music, she describes the role of the pastor, the church musician, and what she calls the “Worship Commission”—a typical worship committee for a local church. She recommends a proper valuation of music within the church and a committee approach to the use of music within the worship service. This avoids one person being responsible for any missteps that might occur and helps to shield musicians from criticisms that might arise from the use of a variety of music styles.

At the end of this section, she includes a chapter on change in worship and music by utilizing lessons from history to describe the power of tradition and the past. She maintains that the essential nature of the worship of God has remained the same through history, though the form of worship has modified to meet changing cultures and situations. She presents three issues that have created unease with change within the Adventist Church: the purpose of church music, the exclusive status of high-church music, and the relationship between secular and sacred music (292). She seeks to resolve the problem of the purpose of music (Should it elevate thought or express the believer’s experience?) by reminding people on both sides of the issue to remember the tension between being uplifted to God and yet expressing the struggles of experience that exist within authentic worship. Regarding the status of high-church music, she reminds her readers that the split between low-church and high-church styles actually occurred during the nineteenth century as an aspect of the Romantic period’s glorification of the past. She suggests a different way to view this divide—adopt the *spirit* of the past, rather than the products of the past (286). Regarding the use of secular music within a church setting, she refers to the history of *contrafacta* in the Reformation period and recommends embracing the change.

Doukhan writes clearly and her presentation is well organized. She footnotes her statements carefully and illustrates in her writing a depth of understanding of both historical and artistic detail in regard to music and a sense of fairness and wisdom in counseling about how to relate to the thorny issue of music choices within the church. Her presentation moves logically from the experience of music to inspired counsel concerning its application to the church today. Her overarching concept is *balance*, an idea that repeatedly appears in the discussion and which prevents a one-sided presentation.

This is a thoughtful book, carefully written, and worth the time for any church musician or pastor to read. The following critiques are not central to the book's overall value, but point to concepts that might be added in a second edition:

A small erratum can be noted: Diagram A (93) is poorly labeled, which could easily lead to the misidentification of landmarks in Herod's Temple. Diagram B on the following page has appropriate labels, though it lacks reference to the Court of Women and the Court of the Gentiles (which is preferable to "Court of the Heathen" in Diagram A).

I would have liked to have seen a focused discussion of the subject of worship itself. Doukhan comes closest to this in chapter 3 ("The Meaning of Music") and in chapter 5 ("Music for God"). She focuses her attention on the question of *music* in worship, rather than worship itself. Music is her area of expertise, so this is not surprising, but can one discuss the meaning of music in worship without first discussing the definition of worship? The interesting ideas she has on the topic of worship are sprinkled throughout the discussion. However, it seems that a focused presentation of them would strengthen her argument and help explicate the underlying principles from which she works.

Another topic I found presented in laconic form was the theology or teaching of John Calvin on music in the church. Doukhan takes almost forty pages to describe Luther's teaching on congregational singing and the use of *contrafacta*, but then allots a mere four pages to John Calvin and just two pages to the Council of Trent. This seems rather one-sided and suggests an affirmation of Luther's perspective without giving due weight to argument on the other side.

Doukhan writes carefully on the subject of rock music and is cautious about its usage in church settings. One point that surprised me, however, was the omission of discussion of volume/dynamics (this could be added to the first section of the book on elements of music). One of the major problems of rock music with its electronic amplification is how loudly it is often played. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration requires ear protection for employees exposed regularly to decibel levels above 85 dBA (http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadispl.show_document?p_table=standards&p_id=9735). Rock concerts can be in the range of 120 dBA, which can cause hearing damage within thirty seconds of exposure (see http://www.ddca.org/pdf/1_ddca/Noise_Decibel_Levels_DDCA_OSAA.pdf). While church music does not normally reach this level of intensity, there are settings where the amplification is set too high for hearing health.

Doukhan's careful call for balance in the use of styles and sensitivity to the cultural and congregational setting in which music appears makes one wish that many a pastor and musician would read this book before imposing on their congregation a personally preferred form of worship music that the congregation is not ready to use. This book is a valuable resource and a

thoughtful read for both musicians and clergy involved with the ministry of music.

Andrews University

THOMAS SHEPHERD

Erickson, Millard J. *Who's Tampering with the Trinity? An Assessment of the Subordination Debate*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009. 272 pp. Paper, \$19.99.

Millard J. Erickson, one of the most widely published and respected North American evangelical theologians of the late twentieth and early twentieth centuries, has produced helpful history, analysis, and assessment of the so-called "Subordination Debate" in *Who's Tampering with the Trinity?* Erickson is a past president of the Evangelical Theological Society and has written widely on the doctrine of God (*God the Father Almighty: A Contemporary Exploration of the Divine Attributes*, 1998), and more specifically on the Trinity, including a chapter in his *Christian Theology* (1982, 2d ed., 1998), *God in Three Persons: A Contemporary Interpretation of the Trinity* (1995), and *Making Sense of the Trinity: Three Crucial Questions* (2000).

The "Subordination Debate" is a theological initiative that has erupted out of lengthy developments in the more recent history of American evangelicalism, who belong primarily to the Reformed tradition and are leading members of the Evangelical Theological Society. All of the major protagonists in the debate claim to be biblical and orthodox in their views of the Trinity. The key issue, however, that has become controversial is the question of Christ's "subordination" to the Father—was his subordination eternal or was it manifest only during Christ's earthly, incarnate experience? Erickson identified two key views in this debate: "Gradational-Authority" and "Equivalent-Authority."

All participants agree that Christ was subordinate to the Father during the earthly incarnation, but the controversy arises out of the claim of the "Gradationalists" that Christ has been eternally subordinate to the Father and that such eternal subordination sets a pattern for other spheres of authority: familial (husbands have intrinsic authority over wives) and ecclesiastical (only males, not females, should have ruling authority in the church). Key protagonists for the Gradational view include Bruce Ware, Wayne Grudem, and Robert Letham, while the leading advocates for the "Equivalent" view include Paul Jewett, Gilbert Bilezikian, Stanley Grenz (now deceased), and Kevin Giles.

Erickson's treatment reflects a valiant attempt to be both thorough and even-handed. He notes that he struggled to find terms of identification for each party in this debate, which is reflected in his attempts to avoid *ad hominem* attacks. His thoroughness is evident in his identification of the key protagonists and the flow of his chapters. After an informative Introduction, chapters 1 and 2 outline the respective views of each major party. Chapter 3 introduces "The Criteria for Evaluating Alternatives," followed by chapters 4-8, which analyze "The Biblical Evidence," "The Historical Considerations," "The Philosophical Issues," "The Theological Dimensions," and "The Practical Implications." The volume concludes with "*Summary and Conclusions*."

thoughtful read for both musicians and clergy involved with the ministry of music.

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THOMAS SHEPHERD

Erickson, Millard J. *Who's Tampering with the Trinity? An Assessment of the Subordination Debate*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009. 272 pp. Paper, \$19.99.

Millard J. Erickson, one of the most widely published and respected North American evangelical theologians of the late twentieth and early twentieth centuries, has produced helpful history, analysis, and assessment of the so-called "Subordination Debate" in *Who's Tampering with the Trinity?* Erickson is a past president of the Evangelical Theological Society and has written widely on the doctrine of God (*God the Father Almighty: A Contemporary Exploration of the Divine Attributes*, 1998), and more specifically on the Trinity, including a chapter in his *Christian Theology* (1982, 2d ed., 1998), *God in Three Persons: A Contemporary Interpretation of the Trinity* (1995), and *Making Sense of the Trinity: Three Crucial Questions* (2000).

The "Subordination Debate" is a theological initiative that has erupted out of lengthy developments in the more recent history of American evangelicalism, who belong primarily to the Reformed tradition and are leading members of the Evangelical Theological Society. All of the major protagonists in the debate claim to be biblical and orthodox in their views of the Trinity. The key issue, however, that has become controversial is the question of Christ's "subordination" to the Father—was his subordination eternal or was it manifest only during Christ's earthly, incarnate experience? Erickson identified two key views in this debate: "Gradational-Authority" and "Equivalent-Authority."

All participants agree that Christ was subordinate to the Father during the earthly incarnation, but the controversy arises out of the claim of the "Gradationalists" that Christ has been eternally subordinate to the Father and that such eternal subordination sets a pattern for other spheres of authority: familial (husbands have intrinsic authority over wives) and ecclesiastical (only males, not females, should have ruling authority in the church). Key protagonists for the Gradational view include Bruce Ware, Wayne Grudem, and Robert Letham, while the leading advocates for the "Equivalent" view include Paul Jewett, Gilbert Bilezikian, Stanley Grenz (now deceased), and Kevin Giles.

Erickson's treatment reflects a valiant attempt to be both thorough and even-handed. He notes that he struggled to find terms of identification for each party in this debate, which is reflected in his attempts to avoid *ad hominem* attacks. His thoroughness is evident in his identification of the key protagonists and the flow of his chapters. After an informative Introduction, chapters 1 and 2 outline the respective views of each major party. Chapter 3 introduces "The Criteria for Evaluating Alternatives," followed by chapters 4-8, which analyze "The Biblical Evidence," "The Historical Considerations," "The Philosophical Issues," "The Theological Dimensions," and "The Practical Implications." The volume concludes with "*Summary and Conclusions*."

Erickson challenges one's thinking, especially in the sense that he provides so many factors important to sound theological reflection and clarity. Thankfully, he not only brings a great deal of eminence and fairness, evidenced by a thorough acquaintance with the writings of all of the major participants, to his analysis and critiques, but he has also invoked a wealth of experience with not only theology, but also philosophy, historical theology, biblical exegesis, and applied theology. This readable volume is not only must reading for those who are interested in Trinity and feminist issues from an evangelical perspective, but is also an outstanding exhibit of sound theological methodology.

While one may disagree with Erickson's conclusions (on every central issue in the debate he has concluded that the prevailing evidence supports the "Equivalent-Authority View"), any attentive reader should come away from reading this work with two important senses: they will know that they have been exposed to an enriching theological tutorial, and been empowered to be more ably analytical and theologically critical.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

Woodrow Whidden

Fladerer, Ludwig. *Augustinus als Exeget: Zu seinen Kommentaren des Galaterbriefes und der Genesis*. Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010. 261 pp. Paper, \$80.00.

Augustine scholarship has at its disposal a multitude of volumes written from the perspective of historical theology and church history, typically addressing a specific theological concern. Ludwig Fladerer in *Augustinus als Exeget: Zu seinen Kommentaren des Galaterbriefes und der Genesis* presents a different approach. He endeavors to better understand the role of Augustine as biblical exegete, and does this from the perspective of a philologist with interest in semiotics. He is, therefore, interested in how Augustine uses words as signs, and in the meanings that can be mined from understanding the structures comprising his Bible commentaries.

The thrust of Fladerer's work is that the rhetorical and linguistic strategies used by Augustine to address practical concerns in his Bible commentaries indicate a Neoplatonic-friendly "semiotic step-model" (233), which would later come to fruition in his renowned discussion of things and signs in *De doctrina christiana*. He finds he can best demonstrate this by using Augustine's three Genesis commentaries (*De Genesi adversus Manichaeos*, *De Genesi ad litteram imperfectus liber*, and *De Genesi ad litteram*), in which the early church theologian discusses both the verbal layer of the text and the layer of meaning it is meant to signify. Thus it is only peripherally that Fladerer's concern is with Augustine's theology of creation. This becomes clear when he explains what Augustine's commentary on Galatians has to do with his commentary on Genesis: in terms of content, nothing; in terms of form and method, much.

Indeed, Fladerer feels that a comparative study is the best means to achieve his aim. The problem is that Augustine's contemporaries were generally

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Indeed, Fladerer feels that a comparative study is the best means to achieve his aim. The problem is that Augustine's contemporaries were generally

not interested in producing works of exegesis on the creation narrative. Resourcefully, the philologist first turns to Augustine's commentary on Galatians, for which a comparison presents itself in Gaius Marius Victorinus, Ambrose, and Jerome; thus Fladerer's curious first sixty pages on Augustine's commentary on Galatians. The remainder and bulk of the work examines Augustine's three Genesis commentaries in turn, evaluating them based on the conclusions derived from the Galatians comparative study.

Being a work in the area of semiotics, *Augustinus als Exeget* is not what a historical or systematic theologian might be accustomed. There are, however, some aspects of the volume that are of value to those not enamored by the call of semiotics. For example, discussion of each commentary is preceded by an overview of the critical literature for that commentary and some of the issues each is concerned. Further, what the philological study enables one to see are words, phrases, and patterns that indicate where Augustine's emphases lay, as well as his method in crafting exegetical arguments.

The largest criticism a theologian uninterested in semiotics might be able to make of the work is one of methodology. That is to say, the extreme atomization that results from concentrating on individual words, phrases, and microstructures seems ineffective in the long term. Sometimes the forest is lost, and even the trees themselves, for such intense interest in the leaves and branches. Augustine as an exegete can only be truly understood when one takes stock of the entire stream of his argument. What views is he battling? What are his hermeneutical presuppositions that emerge amid discussion of specific issues? What *is* the content of Augustine's creation theology, and what is it attempting to achieve? How did this view develop and change over time? A point of fatality in Fladerer's argument is his attempt to analyze structures in Augustine's commentaries in order to ascertain his semiotic model, outlining the relationship between the verbal and the signified without letting Augustine speak for himself in the broad "literal" sense; but that is perhaps because Fladerer is not too keen on the literal.

A case in point: one of Fladerer's conclusions is the irrelevance of the literal for Augustine as an exegete (e.g., 175-176). He claims that the "goal of exegesis is not primarily information, but conversion. Even in his commentaries, Augustine does not wish to delve into historical criticism, because the *historia* of the Bible only presents transitory value" (234). Thus Augustine is concerned not merely with the words of the biblical text but with deeper meanings, especially as they serve to convert the reader's heart and mind. Fladerer's assertion is overly simplistic, however, ignoring the historical development of the *content* of Augustine's creation theology, and what Augustine himself wrote about this development.

It is true that the first sentence of *De Genensis ad litteram* proposes that all Scripture has a figurative meaning. Nevertheless, it also proposes that Scripture has a definite literal meaning as well, despite an apparent "polyvalence" as

the philologist suggests (234). In Book I, Augustine explicitly discusses the fact that his earlier *anti-Manichean* Genesis commentary was an avoidance tactic, used because he did not, at that time, have an adequate understanding of the “literal” meaning. With the passing of time, Augustine claims, the importance and attainability of the task of understanding the literal meaning became evident to him. Augustine makes it clear through painful repetition (a structural feature that Fladerer should have picked up on) that the figurative meaning must be grounded in the historical reality presented by the literal meaning of the text (e.g., *De Gen. ad lit.* VIII; IX.12.20).

While he sometimes claims that his interpretation of the literal meaning is tentative, Augustine is a long way from saying that the literal meaning is irrelevant. In his later commentary, in addition to suggesting what the literal meaning is, he is very clear in saying what the literal meaning definitely is *not* because he knows that it can have destructive consequences. If the literal were irrelevant, he would have had no problem with the literal meanings proposed by the Manicheans with whom he formerly shared company—meanings which the commentary is clearly meant to counter. It is not an issue of the importance of either one or the other for Augustine, but an issue of both/and. The real issue to explore is the question, What does “literal” mean for Augustine? More useful than scrutinizing words, phrases, and minute structures would be an examination of the exegete’s broad hermeneutical presuppositions. It is essential to understand that for Augustine “literal” might not mean “verbally equivalent” or “univocal,” but it does mean “historically real.”

As a work in philology, *Augustinus als Exeget* seems rather impressive to a theologian not well acquainted with the theories and debates of the field of semiotics. Within its own field, it may well be an innovative and useful work worth acquiring. But for those interested in historical-theological matters, who seek a work with clear-cut summaries and theological implications, *Augustinus als Exeget* is a volume that one might be content merely to peruse, as it seems to obfuscate more than enlighten.

Kalamazoo, Michigan

JAMIE G. BOUCHER

Halpern, Baruch, and André Lemaire, eds. Matthew J. Adams, assoc. ed. *The Books of Kings: Sources, Composition, Historiography and Reception*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 129. Leiden: Brill, 2010. xvi + 710 pp. Cloth, \$262.00.

The book under review, *The Books of Kings*, edited by Baruch Halpern and André Lemaire, appears as volume 129 in the Supplements to the Vetus Testamentum series and, following the usual practice of this esteemed publication by Brill, presents a collection of studies focusing on a particular biblical theme or book. The volume reviewed here addresses historical issues surrounding the books

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of Kings and contains a rich collection of twenty-nine essays that represent, when viewed together, a state-of-the-art treatment of these canonical books. The contributors are a distinguished group of twenty-seven scholars and each addresses a specific aspect of this great biblical work in their respective essays. Many of the authors are recognized experts in their particular fields. Several authors, such as coeditors Baruch Halpern and A. Lemaire, as well as A. R. Millard and K. A. Kitchen, wrote multiple chapters. A four-year delay in publication necessitated updating some of the early submissions. However, with a few exceptions (noted below), the essays generally account for any dialogue with current scholarship pertinent to their topic and often offer fresh insights in their treatments. There is little doubt that this volume will serve as a standard reference for the books of Kings for quite some time.

The editors wisely chose to combine all references into a cumulative bibliography. This welcome feature, appearing with increasing frequency in edited works, avoids redundancy, eases the process of tracking down sources, and economizes on space by streamlining an already thick volume. Three indices covering subjects, biblical sources, and authors complete the book. The overall production of the volume is simple, yet attractive, although a few formatting issues are noted, such as kerning issues that are the result of attempting to justify margins and the odd insertion of Hebrew letters in place of the publishers' names in the bibliographic entries for W. Rudolph and K. Rupperecht (652).

The book is divided into six parts. Part 1 contains three studies regarding the textual traditions of Kings from the Septuagint, Qumran, and Josephus, which are authored respectively by A. Schenker, J. Barrera, and É. Nodet. Part 2 consists of five studies addressing the literary aspects of Kings and includes chapters on redaction history (G. Knoppers), two studies on characterization and composition (R. L. Cohn), one on literary structure (Halpern and Lemaire), and another considering outside sources cited in Kings (Millard). Millard not only discusses the royal annals, the letters sent between kings, and the sacred literature referenced in Kings, but also argues for a wide degree of literacy even in rural towns and military posts during the Iron Age. He argues that these earlier sources were both known and available to the author of Kings. Millard concludes that the books of Kings have proven to be historically reliable wherever comparisons with contemporary historical sources have been possible to make and that there is little doubt that the books of Kings were drawn from these earlier sources. Some of these test cases are discussed further by Millard and M. Liverani in their valuable essays found in Part 3, which compares Kings with other extrabiblical historical texts and attempts to place the work in its ancient Near Eastern historiographical context.

Part 4 is devoted to nine people groups mentioned in Kings and includes essays on the Moabites (P-E. Dion and P. M. M. Daviau), the Edomites (Lemaire), the Ammonites (W. E. Aufrecht), and the Arameans (H. Sader)

to the east; the Egyptians and Arabians to the south (K. A. Kitchen); the Philistines to the west (S. Gitin); and the neo-Hittites to the north (Kitchen). The Phoenicians are represented in E. Lipiński's essay on Hiram of Tyre and Solomon. While partially treated by Liverani and Millard, summary discussions of Assyria and Babylonia, as depicted in Kings, are conspicuously absent. The Levantine kingdoms felt the ominous presence of these great empires when they first appeared on the scene during the ninth and late eighth centuries, respectively. The survival of Israel and Judah was directly related to Assyria by the middle of the eighth century, and Judah's fortunes were inexorably linked with Babylonia by the final decade of the seventh century until the fall of Jerusalem in 587/586 B.C. It is, therefore, puzzling why the editors failed to treat these two empires that had such a major impact politically and theologically upon the two Hebrew kingdoms, the exilic community, and, by extension, the authors of Kings.

Deserving special mention in this section is S. Gitin's masterful historical and archaeological survey of the Philistines, complete with color plates. Gitin, who for many years has been involved with excavations at Gezer and Ekron (the latter became one of the five main Philistine centers), is a noted authority on the Philistines and is uniquely qualified to write about the most famous of the five "Sea People" groups. His sixty-four-page treatise goes beyond the books of Kings and is, as far as I know, unparalleled as a source for comparing biblical and Philistine history and culture. His chapter became, for this reviewer, one of the highlights of the entire book.

Part 5 consists of seven essays focused upon detailed issues in Kings. E. Ben Zvi treats the role and image of the prophets to the initial readers of Kings. How the books of Kings represent the priesthood and cult is demonstrated by W. Zwickel. G. Galil discusses dates and calendars, and R. Westbrook investigates law as depicted in Kings. In her chapter on "Officialdom and Society in Kings," I. Eph'al-Jaruzelska attempts to determine the domains of various officials and their expressed roles as far as the biblical data allow. She takes a novel methodological approach by separating officials recorded during the united monarchy from those who later served in Israel and in Judah. Eph'al-Jaruzelska potentially treats each official title three separate times. By doing so, she attempts to discover subtle differences in duties and functions between the three kingdoms.

Drawing upon his research at Ashkelon and expanding Stager's Bronze Age "Port Power" paradigm, D. Master discusses Iron Age trade institutions as depicted in Kings. Master's chapter utilizes a strange combination of APA and SBL styles (e.g., 514-515), which should have been rectified during the editing process. However, he does a notable job in highlighting the importance of trade and the control of trade routes for tax revenue. Especially significant is the amount of detailed data present in the books of Kings that reveal the local and regional struggles faced by the populations of these kingdoms and

how closely trade relationships were tied with prosperity. One may assume that trade between the inland kingdoms and Mediterranean port cities was mutually beneficial since the limited agricultural hinterland controlled by the coastal cities, coupled with a labor force fully engaged in seafaring, provided receptive markets for food products and conversely provided inland kingdoms such as Israel and Judah with much-needed manufactured wares and raw materials. This economic arrangement can be viewed in the relationship between Hiram and Solomon, the ninth-century economic and marriage ties between Phoenicia and the Omrides, as well as those between Jeroboam II and Uzziah during the eighth century, but perhaps also during the seventh, when similar trade relations were quite possibly renewed during Manasseh's reign (cf. 2 Kgs 21:3, 13). This point is overlooked in Master's assessment (510-511).

While Master correctly notes the importance of Hazeva, a huge border fortress and trading hub in the Arabah, recently uncovered by Rudolph Cohen and Y. Yisrael and usually identified with Tamar (cf. 1 Kgs 9:17-18), he mistakenly cites Cohen's encyclopedia entry (which itself is incorrectly dated and lacking pagination) on Kadesh Barnea, rather than referencing one of the late Israeli archaeologist's summary publications on Hazeva (506, n. 20). Control over both sites was undoubtedly critical for extracting duty from Arabian caravans.

Finally, W. Dever's contribution considers the role of archaeology as an outside test source for considering the veracity of the sources found in Kings. Once again, he debunks the Copenhagen and Sheffield "minimalist" (or worse, "nihilist") school, which endeavors to mythologize Israelite biblical history in part by dating its historical writings to the Hellenistic period. Dever's eloquently presented arguments amply demonstrate that writers or redactors living during the Persian, much less the Hellenistic Period, could never have known the historical details preserved in Kings; many of these details are only now confirmed through archaeological excavations. While Dever holds that the biblical record of the monarchy is "largely accurate," he also writes that "biblical writers and editors, like all ancient historians, did not hesitate on occasion to embellish their stories, or even to invent details, *if this was needed to further their ideological agenda*" (521, emphasis supplied). He illustrates this point later, labeling it "authorial intent" (530) and noting the scant biblical references to Lachish in comparison to the importance and promotion that Assyria placed upon this major Judean city. Furthermore, his assertion that the *p̄m* weight, an Iron Age monetary term, only reflects the *realia* of the eighth and seventh centuries (Dever's accepted composition date of Kings) and provides an excellent antidote against a late Hellenistic date for Kings. Nevertheless, his apparent refusal to place the *p̄m* weight in any pre-eighth-century contexts (e.g., 1 Sam 13:19-21) constitutes an argument from silence, which is notoriously weak and need not be considered seriously. Dever ought to exercise caution when making assumptions on the part of the biblical

authors. This reviewer would argue that these ancient writers were faithful to their sources and more accurately shaped their histories by selectivity in their accounts, rather than embellishing and fabricating details.

I agree with Dever's attribution of the eighth-century tower and palace-fortress at Ramat Rahel (Aharoni's stratum VB) to Uzziah's reign; in this, he follows Aharoni's early conclusion. Dever's view challenges the interpretation posited by Ramat Rahel's current excavators, who, it seems, follow the minimalistic ideology arising from Copenhagen and Sheffield by envisioning the site as an Assyrian and Babylonian, rather than Judean, administrative center that was founded no earlier than the reign of Ahaz. Unfortunately, several inaccuracies tarnish Dever's chapter. Two blatant errors are noted here:

First, in his example of correlations between Shishak's raid and the biblical text, Dever claims that "the complete victory stele of this Sheshonq, now [resides] in the Cairo Museum" (520). No complete victory stele recounting a raid by Shishak/Sheshonq to Palestine is known to exist. Perhaps Dever confused Shishak's Bubastite Portal inscription, which includes a toponym list carved on the southern entrance of the Karnak temple of Amon, with the earlier, but more famous Merneptah stele (itself the topic of several Dever papers). Only a fragment of a stele bearing Shishak's name, long displayed at the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem, was unearthed at Megiddo.

Likewise, contrary to Dever (530), no "Babylonian-Assyrian coalition" existed in 609 B.C. and Necho II marched north to fight the Babylonians, not "join" them, as Dever states. In actuality, the Saite ruler attempted to assist the collapsing remnant of Assyria in an ill-fated alliance directed against the resurgent Babylonians. Dever's long familiarity with these well-documented historical sources makes lapses such as these puzzling.

Part 6 contains three studies that discuss the reception of Kings during the Second Temple Period and later antiquity. S. Castelli writes about the books of Kings as portrayed by Josephus, a discussion that shares inescapable points of overlap with the chapter by É. Nodet in Part 1. M. Zetterholm presents a study on the books of Kings as interpreted by the NT, and K. Hedner-Zetterholm writes on Elijah and the books of Kings in Rabbinic literature.

When evaluating the books of Kings with Chronicles in the preface, the editors hold the latter work as "far more simple and less intellectually challenging than Kings . . . more a comic-book version." Regrettably, this sweeping verdict is itself an overly simplistic appraisal and one with which this reviewer differs. Despite acknowledging that the nonsynoptic accounts in Chronicles "certainly offer an interesting subject in themselves" and that Chronicles encompasses "a wider historiographic tradition" than Kings, the editors discount the mounting evidence regarding the Chronicler's use of early sources and mistake his overtly theological presentation as historical fiction. Concerning the nonsynoptic issues, arguments have long been made suggesting that both Kings and Chronicles utilized the same Judean archival

sources. Recently, G. J. Brooke (“The Books of Chronicles and the Scrolls from Qumran,” in *Reflection and Refraction: Studies in Biblical Historiography in Honour of A. Graeme Auld*, ed. R. Rezetko, T. H. Lim, and W. B. Aucker, VTSup 113 [Leiden: Brill, 2007], 35-48) has raised this theory again, utilizing evidence from Qumran. Others have contended that it was often the compiler of Kings who *edited out* material from his account that the Chronicler chose to include; for example, L. L. Grabbe (“Mighty Oaks from [Genetically Manipulated?] Acorns Grow: *The Chronicle of the Kings of Judah* as a Source of the Deuteronomistic History,” in *ibid.*, 155-173, esp. 170). Consequently, the nonsynoptic portions of Chronicles must be evaluated not simply as a chronistic invention, but as a possible source of supplemental historical information unattested in Kings that was present in a common annalistic source used by both authors. R. F. Person Jr. (“The Deuteronomistic History and the Books of Chronicles: Contemporary Competing Historiographies,” in *ibid.*, 315-336) argues that the Deuteronomistic History and Chronicles were written contemporaneously with each other, namely, during the Persian Period.

One notable oversight in the book is the absence of treatments summarizing the history of scholarship relating to Kings, providing an overview of the present state of research, and discussion of possible future trends in the scholarship of these books. Fortunately, several recent publications fill this lacuna, notably the excellent historical surveys by T. Römer and A. de Pury (“Deuteronomistic Historiography (DH): History of Research and Debated Issues,” in *Israel Constructs Its History: Deuteronomistic Historiography in Recent Research*, ed. A. de Pury, T. Römer, and J. -D. Macchi, JSOTSup 306 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000], 24-141); and T. Römer (*The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* [New York: T. & T. Clark, 2005], 13-43), as well as superb anthologies of influential papers concerning Kings, ed. V. P. Long (*Israel's Past in Present Research: Essays on Ancient Israelite Historiography*, Sources for Biblical and Theological Studies 7 [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999]); and G. N. Knoppers and J. G. McConville (*Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History*, Sources for Biblical and Theological Studies 8 [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000]). Moreover, one may cull selected studies from the edited works of S. L. McKenzie and M. P. Graham (*The History of Israel's Traditions: The Heritage of Martin Noth*, JSOTSup 182 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994]); and T. Römer (*The Future of the Deuteronomistic History*, BETL 147 [Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000]) for additional supplementary material not covered in the present volume.

When appraising the history of scholarship regarding the books of Kings, the contributions and lasting influence of Martin Noth cannot be overlooked. Indeed the work of this doyen of German OT scholarship continues to be analyzed and assessed in the volume reviewed here, forty-two years after his death. Noth was thoroughly familiar with archaeological data and integrated archaeological results into his writings. However, he recognized from both

personal experience and by observing others that archaeological “facts” were provisional and subject to change and, furthermore, that archaeological interpretations were often subjective and slanted to correspond with the excavator’s (and his or her disciples’) own historical position or ideology. Consequently, Noth was critical and cautious about utilizing archaeology as a tool for appraising biblical history, particularly when making correlations with the Deuteronomistic History. Nevertheless, this reviewer believes that the high level of scholarship, the presentation of so much carefully analyzed archaeological data, and the overall quality of scholarly inquiry and analysis demonstrated in this book are exemplary, making it worthy of appreciation even by the late German master himself.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

JEFF HUDON

Helmer, Christine, ed. *The Global Luther: A Theologian for Modern Times*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2009. 326 pp. Hardcover, \$39.00.

Four hundred and sixty-five years after his death, Martin Luther continues to impact the world by the originality and genius of his ideas and the power and passion by which he expressed them. *The Global Luther* attempts to reinterpret and assess the monumental impact and the relevance of Luther’s ideas on the modern world. The book is divided into five major themes consisting of sixteen essays written by sixteen authors and an introduction by the editor.

The first section, “Luther’s Global Impact,” written by Risto Saarinen, Peter C. Hodgson, and Munib A. Younan, focuses on Luther’s global impact, moving between historical interpretation and contemporary concerns. Saarinen describes the significance of Luther’s life as an urban “legend” in theology, modern literature, and philosophy. Hodgson contextualizes Luther’s view of freedom, especially in the West and particularly in the American civil-rights movement. Younan describes and recontextualizes Luther’s views on the relation of Christianity to other global religions.

The second section, “Living in the Midst of Horrors,” alludes to Luther’s hymn, “In the midst of life we are to give expression to the task, challenge and despair of living in the world today” (8). The essays in this section contextualize Luther’s life and work by wrestling with what it means to be human in the face of experiences that defy meaningful explanation. James Jones explores Luther’s doctrine of justification through his academic discipline of psychology by analyzing Luther’s psychological and emotional makeup. Volker Leppin struggles with Luther’s doctrine of God in the face of life’s horrors. Krista Duttonhaver works out a theology of suffering in the dialogue between Luther and the twentieth-century thinker Simone Weil. Jacqueline A. Bussie ends the section with a message of hope in a world filled with despair and suffering. This hope we have in the possession of promises that are not yet completed.

personal experience and by observing others that archaeological “facts” were provisional and subject to change and, furthermore, that archaeological interpretations were often subjective and slanted to correspond with the excavator’s (and his or her disciples’) own historical position or ideology. Consequently, Noth was critical and cautious about utilizing archaeology as a tool for appraising biblical history, particularly when making correlations with the Deuteronomistic History. Nevertheless, this reviewer believes that the high level of scholarship, the presentation of so much carefully analyzed archaeological data, and the overall quality of scholarly inquiry and analysis demonstrated in this book are exemplary, making it worthy of appreciation even by the late German master himself.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

JEFF HUDON

Helmer, Christine, ed. *The Global Luther: A Theologian for Modern Times*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2009. 326 pp. Hardcover, \$39.00.

Four hundred and sixty-five years after his death, Martin Luther continues to impact the world by the originality and genius of his ideas and the power and passion by which he expressed them. *The Global Luther* attempts to reinterpret and assess the monumental impact and the relevance of Luther’s ideas on the modern world. The book is divided into five major themes consisting of sixteen essays written by sixteen authors and an introduction by the editor.

The first section, “Luther’s Global Impact,” written by Risto Saarinen, Peter C. Hodgson, and Munib A. Younan, focuses on Luther’s global impact, moving between historical interpretation and contemporary concerns. Saarinen describes the significance of Luther’s life as an urban “legend” in theology, modern literature, and philosophy. Hodgson contextualizes Luther’s view of freedom, especially in the West and particularly in the American civil-rights movement. Younan describes and recontextualizes Luther’s views on the relation of Christianity to other global religions.

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Section 3, "Language, Emotion, and Reason," addresses Luther's attention to how reason and emotion are conveyed through language. One of his greatest literary contributions was his translation of the Bible into German, which showed a remarkable sensitivity to the capacity of language to describe reality. Birgit Stolt, using literary linguistics, examines Luther's translation practices and shows how he is careful about using specific terms to express emotions, particularly the ones attached to the experience of justification. Hans-Peter Grosshans studies Luther's texts on reason to prove that Luther considered reason a gift from God to advance communication and understanding.

Section 4, "Luther's Theology for Today," is probably the most significant because it "highlights Luther's specific distinctive ideas that have made a lasting impact on Lutheran traditions and beyond." The most significant of these ideas, justification and the theology of the cross, are the foundation of Luther's theology and have generated the most reflection from theologians and nontheologians across the centuries. Theodore Dieter analyzes why Luther's doctrine of justification still matters today. This vital issue remains the *raison d'être* of Christianity. Antti Raunio addresses the social and ethical implications of justification in the political reality of the Nordic welfare states. Ralph F. Thiemann analyzes Luther's theology of the cross within the contemporary context of religious pluralism.

Section 5, "Politics and Power," addresses the ecclesial and political dimensions of human life in the world. One of Luther's most revolutionary ideas, the "priesthood of all believers," if it had been applied directly to existing political and religious structures, would have had a profound revolutionary impact. However, Luther's own ambivalence about this idea greatly limited its impact on the existing political and religious orders of his time. Peter J. Burgard analyzes Luther's rhetoric from a literary linguistic perspective. Allen G. Jorgenson shows how the idea of the priesthood of all believers can be applied to today's liberation movements. Vitor Westhelle focuses on the binary opposition of the "two kingdoms" and recontextualizes his theory in view of the Lutheran global population.

The sixteen authors of the book who attempted to apply Luther's thinking to the issues of our day have done a good job, considering the complexity and enigmatic nature of the man. Recognizing the difficulty of analyzing the work of one of the most original and provocative theological thinkers of all time and using the prism of their various disciplines, these authors give new and exciting ways of reading and interpreting Luther. They struggled mightily in their attempts to grasp the immensity, depth, and paradoxical nature of many of Luther's ideas. Birgit Stolt captures it well when she describes Luther as impossible. How do you label or classify him? Is he a "mystic humanist, or a renaissance personality, or a forerunner of the Enlightenment"? It seems that "he has characteristics of them all" (131). She warns of misusing his writings and treating him as a man of our time. The other extreme is no better, for

we also risk seeing him merely as a medieval former monk caught in the superstitions of his time. Part of the complexity of Luther lies in the fact that we must discard the saying that “truth often lies somewhere between.” In the case of Luther, he was “both/and” rather than between. Stolt describes him as modern in his theories and practice of biblical translation, and medieval in his outlook on life and the world.

Part of the problem in understanding Luther is that he was the master of paradoxes. Many of his theological ideas are expressed in paradoxes and opposites. For example, he writes of a God who is revealed in his hiddenness. He speaks eloquently of freedom, but asserts that the Lord demands subjection to the authority of the state. He sees the Bible as promises and law, grace and judgment. He encourages the peasants to embrace their freedom, but urges the knights to destroy these same freedom-seeking peasants.

These essays highlight brilliantly the pervasive influence of Luther’s idea on much of modern Western thinking. The theological ideas on justification and the theology of the cross are still a major theological foundation for much of evangelical Protestantism. Luther’s principle of biblical translation and his passionate and precise use of words to capture the emotion of the biblical text have set the standard for critical biblical translation. His focus on freedom throughout his writings is rightly recognized by some of the writers in this book. One describes it this way: “One word captures what Luther’s name, life and work were all about: freedom was inscribed—by his decision—into his name. Luther created the name “Luther” for himself, deriving it from the Greek word *eleutheria* (“liberty”) (11). Luther’s focus on freedom was, however, on spiritual, not political or economic, freedom. But that does not prevent his admirers and disciples from appropriating his concept of freedom to their situation. The peasants of his day, as well as the civil-rights movement’s greatest hero, Martin Luther King, understood the term in this way. King was so inspired by Luther that his name was changed from Michael King Jr. to that of the great reformer, and through the providence of history the two men would be linked forever.

While Luther has been excoriated by his enemies and lionized by his admirers, the question must be asked, Will the real Martin Luther stand up? We can learn much from his own writings, but, of course, these writings must also be interpreted within his times. Luther’s writings can be vulgar and harsh, especially against his enemies. He appears at times to be bellicose and dogmatic, acting much like those he was castigating. At times, however, his writing overflows with compassion, love, and tenderness, and he appears as a gentle, caring pastor. In many ways, Luther personifies all of us in our ambiguity and sometimes contradicting personalities. The writers of these essays explore much of this ambiguity and give new perspectives on Luther. In some ways, this book teaches us something about ourselves, revealing to us our own inconsistencies, contradictions, and paradoxes if we are willing to

be open to them. For those who read and admire Luther, this book should be an important addition to their library.

Andrews University

TREVOR O'REGGIO

Hepner, Gershon. *Legal Friction: Law, Narrative, and Identity Politics in Biblical Israel*, Studies in Biblical Literature 78. New York: Peter Lang, 2010. xx + 1110 pp. Hardcover, \$155.95.

Gershon Hepner is a poet and independent scholar who has written a number of articles on law and narrative. *Legal Friction* has been described by the editor as a cross-disciplinary, progressive work, designed to broaden the horizon of biblical scholarship in line with the series *Studies in Biblical Literature* published by Peter Lang. The work is divided into three parts: the Genesis narratives, the narratives in Exodus-Samuel, and primeval history (Gen 1:1–11:25). The author covers a wide range of secondary sources, including Rabbinic literature (Mishnah, Tosephta, and the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmuds), the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, post-midrashic literature, classical authors, and ancient Near Eastern texts and inscriptions. An extensive index and a fifty-page bibliography indicate the breadth of this volume.

Legal Friction is an intertextual study (a method reintroduced by, e.g., A. Roberts and further developed by S. Sandmel, I. Seeligmann, N. Sarna, and M. Fishbane) that follows the innertextual approach of David Daube, who first identified legal elements in narrative. Daube's student Calum Carmichael is credited for encouraging Hepner to enter the study of law and narrative (xvi). As the title suggests, the book is about alleged social friction among different identity groups within ancient Israel as reflected in law and narrative. Interest in literary analysis and historical criticism is also shared by Carmichael, but both interpreters reach conclusions diametrically opposed to each other. For Carmichael, the laws were written after the narratives of Genesis, whereas for Hepner "the Genesis narratives were written in the light of biblical laws, which are their *Vorlage*" (539). Be that as it may, it goes to show the subjective nature of generic theories and the tentative character of proposals for reconstructing social settings behind the laws and narratives of the Hebrew Bible.

Hepner deals specifically with the Genesis narratives and the Sinai codes (Covenant Code, Priestly Torah, Holiness Code, Holiness School, and Deuteronomy). The book is built upon the following assumptions: the Genesis narrative (1) was codified primarily in the exilic and partially in the postexilic periods, long after the Sinai laws were given; (2) was cast in light of the Sinai laws by making the patriarchs either conform to or transgress them; (3) upheld the unconditional covenant of the patriarchs, over against the futility of applying the Sinai covenant literally; (4) signaled God's preference

be open to them. For those who read and admire Luther, this book should be an important addition to their library.

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for the unconditional covenants, making it possible for the exiles to recover their faith and eventually heed God's call to return to Jerusalem.

To support the points above, the author uses a particular method derived from midrashic exegesis. However, rather than using a variety of tools—as one would expect in a book this size—the author makes heavy use of one particular technique: anagrammatic verbal resonance (472), which involves the association of two different verbs sharing two identical but alternating root consonants that produce similar sounds.

Because the author juxtaposes texts together on the basis of verbs anchored by their resonating consonants, much is at stake in his “midrashic approach” (xvi). It would be useful to know in detail what is meant by “midrash” and how anagrammatic verbal resonance relates to traditional forms of midrash. For example, the use of anagrammatic verbal resonance does not seem to take stock of two distinct Rabbinic methods governing law and narrative: variant, flexible methods for narrative (*Aggadah*), and more limited, stringent rules for laws (*Halakha*). Saul Lieberman notes that hermeneutical rules have long been applied to laws on the basis of choice and discrimination rather than creative imagination as in narrative (*Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* [New York: JTS, 1994], 78).

Hepner summarizes his methodology in eight steps (44), but holds that a mere minimum of three justify use of his method. Further elaboration of a set of criteria for the presence of anagrammatic verbal resonance could, chart a clearer path amid the collision of suggested interpretations in *Legal Friction*.

Claiming that the rabbis believed the patriarchs followed the Sinai laws, but without providing any supporting textual links (3-4), the author sets out to provide just that by way of anagrammatic verbal resonance. Due to the copious repetition of root letters in the Hebrew verbal system, he finds a plethora of verbal associations that he uses to link texts together. This imaginative method is well suited for him, as he concerns himself with possibilities, secondary meanings, and hidden politics in the text. Statements are framed by words such as “imply, infer, resonate, allude, mirror, echo.”

Hepner's interest in the text is driven by “implications over and above its plain meaning” (690), leading him to posit multiple meanings. Recently, however, scholars have recognized a certain nuance within midrash, what one might describe as a tension between the variety of interpretation, on one hand, and a singleness of purpose, on the other. William Scott Green explains that even the disjunctive Rabbinic interpretations (so-called *davar 'aber*) “operate within a limited conceptual sphere and a narrow thematic range . . . that do not conflict but are mutually reinforcing . . . Thus, rather than ‘endless multiple meanings’ . . . they in fact ascribe multiple variations of a single meaning” (“The Hebrew Scriptures in Rabbinic Judaism,” in *Rabbinic Judaism: Structure and System*, Jacob Neusner and William Scott Green [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995], 39-41).

At times the author's examples of anagrammatic verbal resonance seem to move too quickly from semantics to hermeneutics to historical reconstruction of the text's setting. For example, it is difficult to follow the transition from word analysis to the conclusion that the Genesis narratives postdate Sinai laws. It would be equally plausible to speak of the patriarchs as embodying implicit principles of what later came to be revealed as the Sinaitic laws.

As for the question of covenants, Hepner holds that the Genesis stories were created to prioritize the unconditional covenant of the patriarchs over against the conditional terms of Sinai, in that the Genesis stories "supported the view that the conditional Sinai covenant, whose violation Leviticus 26 explains was the cause of the Babylonian exile, was transformed into the unconditional patriarchal covenant" (9). This sharp dichotomy tends to miss the broad contours of both covenants; both contain conditional and unconditional elements, albeit in different measure. In Lev 26:43-44, the sins of the people, which conditioned them to exile, contrast with YHWH's promise of forgiveness for those who confess and repent. Also in vv. 41-42, there remains an element for potential transformation within the Sinaitic covenant itself.

By the same token, Jacob's deceiving of his father and brother sent him into exile in Aram (404), even under the unconditional covenants of Genesis (404). Conditional as well as unconditional elements in both covenants tend to minimize the idea that only the unconditional covenant of the patriarchs generated the necessary hope and encouragement for exiles to arise from the ashes of their past, regain their confidence in God, and return to Jerusalem.

No short review could address the many facets of this encyclopedic tome. *Legal Friction* is certainly the most comprehensive study on law and narrative thus far written from an intertextual standpoint. This book will stimulate further the debate over the relation of law and narrative.

The following errata should be noted:

Errata	Corrections
"Viejola" (123)	"Veijola"
"Sarah" (207)	"Hagar"
"linksbetween" (226)	"links between"
"Abraham" (247)	"Abimelech"
"Moses" (282)	"Abraham"
"Elazar" (336)	"Eleazar"
"Jacob" (389)	"Joseph"
"Abimelech" (427)	"Isaac"
"girl" (501)	"man"
"how" (605)	the repetition of the word
"Joseph"	"Moses" (620)
truncated printing (610)	

LeMon, Joel M., and Kent Harold Richards, eds. *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Petersen*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009. xix + 624 pp. Paper, \$49.95.

In this festschrift dedicated to Daniel L. Petersen, scholars undertake a thorough look at various methods to approach the Hebrew Bible, starting with the classical historical-critical approaches and progressing to more recent methods.

In a brief tribute to Petersen's scholarship and teaching, S. Dean McBride and James Luther Mays highlight the breadth of Petersen's methodology. In his interactions with many institutions and his own faith community, he encourages students, laymen, and scholars to value the process of interpretation—in essence the methodology—of the Scriptures.

Two distinctly different article types have been considered in this tribute: a presentation style, in which a particular hermeneutical method is introduced, and a taxonomical approach, in which methodological approaches are grouped into families. Twenty-three methodological articles are included that showcase a variety of hermeneutical approaches such as the traditional historical-critical approach (form, source, redaction, and textual criticism), comparative, iconographic, religiohistorical, historiographical, psychological, anthropological, sociological, narrative, poetic, feminist, gender, ecological, ethical, theological, homiletical, Latin American (liberation), midrash, and postmodern literary approaches. The second set of articles reflects on the taxonomical categories of historical-critical, social-scientific, literary, ideological, postcritical, and reception criticism.

Thomas Römer, "Redaction Criticism: 1 Kings 8 and the Deuteronomists," traces the history of redaction criticism from the early stages of the documentary hypothesis to its current development. The quest for the original text of the Hebrew Bible was the early driving force, and little attention was given to the redactors' approaches. By the mid-twentieth century, and largely due to the work of Martin Noth and Willi Marxsen, this trend changed and the redactors were now viewed as careful and educated individuals or communities of thought. Subsequently, two schools of thought developed, subdividing the redactors into two (following Frank Moore Cross) and three (the "Göttingen school") different redactors. These various redactors are labeled according to the themes they cover in their redactions: the Deuteronomistic Historian (DtrH), explaining the reasons for Israel's fall; the Prophetic Deuteronomist (DtrP), emphasizing the prophetic stories; and the Nomistic Deuteronomist (DtrN), detailing aspects of the law. Currently, scholarship is expanding this methodology from the Pentateuch and the historic books to the wisdom literature and the prophets. Next, Römer highlights three literary indicators of a redactor's insertion: literary and historical dissonance, literary coherence, and resumption (*Wiederaufnahme*).

To illustrate these processes, Römer turns to Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple in 1 Kings 8. Based on different themes he finds in the corpus of the prayer, Römer observes the work of three redactors: the portrayal in vv. 14-21 of Solomon as a worthy successor to David, originating in the Josianic era; in vv. 22-40 and 46-56 of Solomon as the temple builder, originating in the Babylonian exile; and in vv. 52-53 and 57-61 of Solomon as the preacher of the Torah. Römer concludes with the premise that the redactors "did not want to hide their work," but saw themselves as literary craftsmen who interpreted, validated, or altered the material at hand. Since they were just as instrumental in crafting the Hebrew Bible as the primary author(s), they should, therefore, be treated with the same respect.

Römer's summary of redaction criticism is laudable. In a limited number of pages he succinctly highlights the major landmarks in history, interpretation, and case study. At the same time, however, brevity works against him. First, the interested reader will want to have further endnotes for blanket statements, especially those referring to the work of other scholars ("scholars agree" or "there is disagreement"). Second, his critique of the redaction skeptic John van Seters singularly rests on an attestation of redactionism in the Gilgamesh epoch. Such evidence only proves the possibility of redactors in the Hebrew Bible, rather than mandating them. A stronger argument, especially from the Hebrew Bible would be more convincing. Third, brevity works against Römer in the sample passage. Here he presents only summary statements of his findings. How these are evident in the text and preferable to other readings of this passage is not divulged. As a result, his arguments appear simplistic and even circular. Fourth, it is unclear how he fits into the dual or triple division of redactors as outlined in his historical development. He divides the passage into three redactors, but this division has no correlation to the "Göttingen school." In fact, he considers the nomistic influence (presumably DtrN) to be the first strata and located in the Josianic era. This would contradict the general assumption that DtrN is, instead, postexilic. Finally, he considers the core of the story to consist only of 1Kgs 8:12-13, at best 8:1-13. As a result, Solomon's prayer is comprised entirely of redactions, which raises the question, Why would redaction criticism be the preferred method over source criticism? At what point does a redactor become a source?

Brent A. Strawn, "Comparative Approaches: History, Theory, and the Image of God," traces the beginning of the comparative approach to Müller (1870), who was fueled by archeological discoveries. However, even early on, the discipline encountered difficulties that are still prevalent today. On one hand, the lack of understanding and appreciation between biblical scholars and comparative scholars has alienated the two camps. On the other hand, comparative scholars have easily fallen prey to a bias of overemphasizing either similarity or dissimilarity. Additionally, the field of comparative approaches has lent itself to gross misjudgments, and Strawn even shows how the approach

was influential to anti-Semitism among German theologians in the post-World War I era. Attempting to develop a solid scientific foundation, Hallo and Smith advocated a contextual approach, which included a fourfold differentiation into ethnographic, encyclopedic, morphological, and evolutionary elements. Much like Strawn, Smith warns of both an apologetic presupposition to comparative approaches and a sole presupposition of similarity. Smith asserts that there always needs to be an element of dissimilarity. Miner will go even a step further. Objectivity can only be reached if the comparison is intercultural and if the comparison includes not only two but three comparative elements. Strawn appreciates this attempt, though he argues that in most cases this triangulation approach is hardly possible.

With the historical and methodological background settled, Strawn takes a fresh look at the concept of the *imago Dei* found in the Genesis account of creation and the Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Neo-Assyrian records. In comparing the Neo-Assyrian annals with Genesis, Strawn demonstrates that in both records gods bestow humans with authority over animals. Dissimilarity can be established by observing how the authority manifests itself. Neo-Assyrian kings employ the hunt as a sign of their superiority and as a metaphor for the battlefield, and conversely enemies are equated with butchered game. The language of Genesis could etymologically imply a similar view, but contextually it becomes clear that humanity's authority over the animal kingdom and the land is not based on violence but "serving" (*šm*) and 'preserving' (*bd*)" (134). The *imago Dei* is, then, in some ways similar to the Neo-Assyrian assertion, in that royal and authoritative language is employed; but Genesis produces a picture of nonviolence (even vegetarianism) contrary to the violence of the Neo-Assyrian royal imagery. Strawn, then, continues to follow Miner in reinforcing this distinction on the basis of triangulation. He examines iconography of the Assyrians and Neo-Assyrians, noting that some of the icons go beyond the written records. A royal figure is depicted as saving a helpless creature from a predator and thereby ruling on behalf of those needing assistance. This nontextual data expands the view of the ANE backdrop, though it is removed by several layers from a direct comparison.

Strawn presents a compelling and eloquent summary of comparative methodology. His foremost achievement in this chapter is the balanced approach he espouses in regard to similarity and dissimilarity. Additionally, he does not shy from exposing tensions among advocates of this methodology or from proposing a resolution. Most of the chapter is spent illustrating the interpretative steps on the basis of Neo-Assyrian royal iconography and texts. A substantial number of primary sources have been woven throughout the article, which allows the reader to personally evaluate the documents.

At the outset of her chapter, "Narrative Analysis: Meaning, Context, and Origins of Genesis," Yairah Amit argues that although narrative criticism is a relatively new discipline, sages and Jewish commentaries have practiced it for

ages. She then differentiates between a synchronic and diachronic approach of narrative criticism, which should be more accurately defined respectively as a “final form approach,” and a “historical-critical approach.” The synchronic approach is for scholars who have a “(to put it bluntly) . . . unfamiliarity with the broad scope of redaction- and source-critical research” (272). Amit then addresses how a singular story with multiple redactions can still be treated as a narrative unit. She argues that the editors all followed an editorial policy to maintain the unity and meaning of the story.

Amit examines the Judah and Tamar story of Genesis 38 as a case study. Based on explanatory phrases by the narrator, she argues that both Judah and Tamar were justified in their behavior since they sought a greater good. She proposes this interpretation as an embracing of intermarriage based on the equality concepts of the Holiness Code. As a result of her study, she concludes that the writers of the Holiness Code must have been members of the tribe of Judah, who tried to strengthen their position among the tribes over the Benjaminites during the Persian exile.

Amit’s chapter is an attempt to reevaluate Adler’s famous treatment of the passage and fit it into a “diachronic” view of the development of the text. Unfortunately, the article leaves many important questions unanswered, especially in regard to methodology:

First, she claims that only a “diachronic” approach, based on source and redaction criticism is valid. However, these approaches stand in contrast to the idea of a literary unit, since by definition redactors had distinctive themes and theologies that are intended to be clearly identified (see Römer above). Amit tries to solve this contradiction with the blanket assertion that “despite the repeated editorial interventions and the various motivations of the editors,” the text became a unit by process of an “editorial policy that gave the work the appearance of consistency” (272), which “harmonizes with its setting” (280). This leap of faith is neither explained nor further elaborated. Additionally, the question of what role narrative criticism is to play if it is only second-tiered to source and redaction criticism remains unanswered.

Second, the ideal of following source or redaction criticism is not followed up in the study of Genesis 38. For all practical purposes, Amit approaches the text with the “final form” she so ardently fights against. The closest she gets to a historical-critical approach is her disregard for the immediate context as helpful for understanding the passage. Instead, she draws from 1 Samuel, Ruth, Nehemiah, Leviticus, and Jeremiah as the contextual setting that sheds light on the dynamics of the passage. The dissimilarities, for example, in narrative style, content, and character are disregarded for the sake of her argument.

Third, methodologically Amit fails to inform and demonstrate to the reader objective considerations to the narrative approach. With the exception of her treatment of the narrator aside, the sample analysis of Genesis 38 becomes

a subjective rereading of the narrative rather than a study based on a set of literary devices and techniques (e.g., hetero- versus homodiegetic elements, diction rules, verbal threads, character perspectives, norms, and distance).

Fourth, Amit argues that the passage is based on a pro-law stance, as showcased by the authors of the Holiness Code. In her single view, she forgets to observe the general positive disposition of the Hexateuch toward sojourners, as well as the dissimilarities between Genesis 38 and the Holiness code (e.g., sexual improprieties). The dissimilarities are larger than the similarities.

Fifth, Amit's proposed reconstruction of the social agenda of two dueling tribes in the Persian exile, which rely on the Holiness Code writers to insert passages to sustain power, lacks larger support. Were the Holiness Code authors politically rather than ethically or religiously motivated? How do the authors of the Priestly Code and the tribe of Levites fare in this dispute?

Finally, Amit glosses over the historical background and, at times, employs a polemical style toward her skeptics.

In conclusion, this festschrift excels in presenting a wide range of different methodologies from the traditional to the recent. The layout of each chapter is helpful and engaging as history and method, with an illustrative example included. The readability appeals to scholars-in-the-making without (for the most part) losing depth. Even the seasoned scholar will find a pool of resources in this book. Inherently though, this presentation style focuses on the idea of constructive diversity; but, at the same time, it leaves out contradictions between the methodologies (e.g., repetition may be a sign of redactors or of narrative emphasis). Additionally, no attempt is made to struggle with the underlying philosophical presuppositions that each methodology is built upon. The presentation is rather like a potpourri, in which all methods are treated as equal partners with equal justification. While this pluralistic trend is a welcome change to the exclusive methodological approach of previous decades, it does beg further discussion of these philosophical presuppositions—the metanarrative, so to speak. While the scope of this book cannot cover all of these concerns, it is the hope of the reviewer that such a follow-up will be considered in the future. Additionally, a similar volume covering the NT would be valuable. With consideration for its limitations, this book is a valuable resource in any personal or public library, as well as a tool in the classroom.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

EIKE MUELLER

Mack, Phyllis. *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. 301 pp. Hardcover, \$175.00.

Methodist historiography—like Seventh-day Adventist historiography—has long been dominated by men. In this groundbreaking work by Phyllis Mack,

a subjective rereading of the narrative rather than a study based on a set of literary devices and techniques (e.g., hetero- versus homodiegetic elements, diction rules, verbal threads, character perspectives, norms, and distance).

Fourth, Amit argues that the passage is based on a pro-law stance, as showcased by the authors of the Holiness Code. In her single view, she forgets to observe the general positive disposition of the Hexateuch toward sojourners, as well as the dissimilarities between Genesis 38 and the Holiness code (e.g., sexual improprieties). The dissimilarities are larger than the similarities.

Fifth, Amit's proposed reconstruction of the social agenda of two dueling tribes in the Persian exile, which rely on the Holiness Code writers to insert passages to sustain power, lacks larger support. Were the Holiness Code authors politically rather than ethically or religiously motivated? How do the authors of the Priestly Code and the tribe of Levites fare in this dispute?

Finally, Amit glosses over the historical background and, at times, employs a polemical style toward her skeptics.

In conclusion, this festschrift excels in presenting a wide range of different methodologies from the traditional to the recent. The layout of each chapter is helpful and engaging as history and method, with an illustrative example included. The readability appeals to scholars-in-the-making without (for the most part) losing depth. Even the seasoned scholar will find a pool of resources in this book. Inherently though, this presentation style focuses on the idea of constructive diversity; but, at the same time, it leaves out contradictions between the methodologies (e.g., repetition may be a sign of redactors or of narrative emphasis). Additionally, no attempt is made to struggle with the underlying philosophical presuppositions that each methodology is built upon. The presentation is rather like a potpourri, in which all methods are treated as equal partners with equal justification. While this pluralistic trend is a welcome change to the exclusive methodological approach of previous decades, it does beg further discussion of these philosophical presuppositions—the metanarrative, so to speak. While the scope of this book cannot cover all of these concerns, it is the hope of the reviewer that such a follow-up will be considered in the future. Additionally, a similar volume covering the NT would be valuable. With consideration for its limitations, this book is a valuable resource in any personal or public library, as well as a tool in the classroom.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

EIKE MUELLER

Mack, Phyllis. *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. 301 pp. Hardcover, \$175.00.

Methodist historiography—like Seventh-day Adventist historiography—has long been dominated by men. In this groundbreaking work by Phyllis Mack,

a historian at Rutgers University, we find a helpful model for Adventist studies. The author “challenges traditional, negative depictions of early Methodism through an analysis of a vast array of primary sources—prayers, pamphlets, hymns, diaries, recipes, private letters, accounts of dreams, rules of housekeeping—many of which had not been used before” to study how men and women understood “the seismic shift from the religious culture of the seventeenth century” to the “disenchantment” that evolved from the Enlightenment.

At the heart of this book is the idea that religion needs to be understood from the perspective of the ordinary person: “The Methodist renewal movement was not ‘about’ sex or social dislocation, but religion,” she argues (7).

People who wept and shouted at the revival meeting did not embrace religious enthusiasm in order to vent their emotional or sexual frustrations; rather their frustrations . . . had moved them to ask questions about their spiritual lives. Secular historians need an angle of vision that allows them not only to accept these spiritual concerns as sincere and legitimate, but to share, however imperfectly, the struggles of ordinary Methodists and lay preachers, to stand with individual men and women as they worked to shape their own subjectivity . . . over a lifetime (28).

Central to this thesis is the notion of “agency,” which is more than the secular free exercise of self-willed behavior, but requires a more complex definition to fit early Methodism. She suggests that these early Methodists defined agency “as the freedom to want and to do what is right” (9). The paradox of strength in weakness led to a reinforcement of Enlightenment ideals and Protestant theology that both contradicted and reinforced one another (cf. 12-15). Thus Methodists addressed agency through their emotions. The attempt to understand and even control their emotions was, therefore, part of the process of modernization (18).

Although Methodism was primarily a “women’s movement,” Mack argues that the historiography has largely ignored “the thinking and behavior of actual women” (19). Emotion was no longer an external force, but an innate feeling or sentiment emanating from within.

Chapters 1 and 2 introduce John and Charles Wesley and the people who followed them as they sought to achieve a balance between passive submission to God and activity in the world (29-82). Chapters 3, “Men of Feeling,” and 4, “Women in Love,” discuss the emotional lives of male and female preachers and leaders, especially the relationship between their experience of human love and the development of their different spiritual vocabularies (83-170). Chapter 5, “Mary Fletcher on the Cross,” details the central symbol of Christ on the cross in relationship to popular perceptions of the body, and the spiritual meaning of pain. In chapter 6, Mack discusses the question of dreams and the supernatural and their relationship to the Methodist’s own

psychology and self-perception; and, in chapter 7, she discusses changes in consciousness and practice as Methodism entered the new century.

This book is a valuable study for students within Adventist studies, because it provides a new vignette and revisionist perspective to draw from for understanding Methodism; which is one of the significant and formative influences impacting the formation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Perhaps what is most helpful is chapter 6 on the “culture of dreaming.” Many of the pioneers of Adventism had dreams that they understood as having spiritual significance. Wesley both affirmed the reality of supernatural events, yet denied assurance as to their interpretation beyond the dreamer’s own changed life; yet, dreams “constituted an absolutely vital unifying discourse” (227). Such dreams personified “heart religion” through emotion and action, with men and women viewing such dreams differently: male leaders viewed dreams as a way to allay anxiety, while female leaders viewed their dreams as visionary and telepathic, and as revelatory of their own inner natures (232). When male leaders gained prominence as circuit preachers, they interpreted fewer dreams, argues Mack, which she suggests reflects “pressure to present Methodism as a respectable movement” (243). Thus the most significant aspect of dreaming was “the power of dreams to generate individual reflexivity and to assist the religious seeker in shaping her own autobiography” (257).

Mack offers a compelling read into the ordinary men and women who embraced the Methodist project of self-transformation. In this journey, individuals, and notably women, had an opportunity to shape their response to life experiences. Methodist theology and discipline promoted a new self-awareness that earlier religious seekers could not have imagined (263).

Wichita, Kansas

MICHAEL W. CAMPBELL

Moore, Marvin. *The Case for the Investigative Judgment: Its Biblical Foundation*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2010. Paper, \$19.99.

Marvin Moore, Editor of *Signs of the Times* magazine, has written more than thirty popular books on various religious subjects. His recent book, *The Case for the Investigative Judgment: Its Biblical Foundation*, is considered by the author to be “the most complex writing project I have ever attempted” (12). Moore devoted more than two years to researching and writing the book, during which time he digested the major monographs and doctoral dissertations written on the subject by Adventist scholars. This book is the author’s attempt to “bridge the gap between the scholar and the lay person” and “bring everything [on the subject] together in one place” (ibid.) so that readers can understand clearly the sanctuary and investigative judgment (16).

The first section of the book (chaps. 2-4) gives an overview of the biblical doctrine of the investigative judgment, shows its compatibility with

psychology and self-perception; and, in chapter 7, she discusses changes in consciousness and practice as Methodism entered the new century.

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The first section of the book (chaps. 2-4) gives an overview of the biblical doctrine of the investigative judgment, shows its compatibility with

righteousness by faith, and notes its contribution to the overarching Great Controversy theme in Scripture. A second section (chaps. 5-7) surveys the history of the development of the investigative-judgment doctrine from its Millerite roots to its present-day understanding, while acknowledging a growth in understanding of the topic and including a review of notable critics of this foundational doctrine and Adventist responses to such criticism.

The succeeding sections of the book explore issues in Daniel 7 (chaps. 8-11), Daniel 8 (chaps. 12-17), the investigative judgment and the sanctuary (chaps. 18-22), issues in Daniel 9 (chaps. 23-27), and issues in Hebrews (chaps. 28-33). Moore then provides some concluding thoughts regarding Ellen White and the investigative judgment, gives a synthesis of the doctrine, and suggests ways in which the investigative judgment is relevant for today (chaps. 34-36). An epilogue presents Moore's personal conviction after his thorough review of the biblical evidence: "the basic framework of our historic teaching about the investigative judgment truly is biblical—and it makes sense" (346).

Moore is to be commended for wading through scores of scholarly studies on the subject of the investigative judgment, synthesizing the material, and making it understandable to the average educated layperson. His summaries of the biblical arguments of various Adventist scholars are generally accurate and clearly presented. He has been especially helpful in clarifying how the investigative judgment is not in contradiction with righteousness by faith and does not rob the believer of the assurance of salvation. Although recognizing our accountability in the judgment and the need for God's people "to be loyal—to *commit* to obey Him and to *try* to obey Him" (30), he makes clear that "In the judgment, the standing of those who are saved will always be based upon their being covered with Christ's righteousness, never upon their own success in obeying God's laws" (33).

Moore also makes a special contribution by emphasizing the role of Satan as the "Accuser of the brethren" in the judgment and by highlighting issues of theodicy (the justification of God). He shows how the investigative judgment is not for the sake of informing God (who already knows who are his), but to reveal to the unfallen heavenly intelligences the truth about his people, vindicating them (and thus himself) against the charges of Satan. "The reason why those who have accepted Jesus as their Savior need have no fear of the judgment is that Jesus, their Mediator, is responding to every one of Satan's accusations against them" (46). In the investigative judgment, God is shown to be fair, reasonable, just, and on the side of his people!

The average (motivated) reader should be able to clearly follow the various exegetical steps taken by Moore as he works his way through the issues in Daniel 7-9, which are seen in light of the sanctuary services described in the Pentateuch. More advanced students of Scripture will also benefit by seeing the various pieces of the sanctuary puzzle brought together to form the complete picture. Moore marshals powerful biblical evidence to support the

various interlocking parts of the investigative-judgment doctrine, including points such as the basic hermeneutical principles of historicism and the year-day principle; the reference to Rome (pagan and papal) in the little horn of Daniel 8, and not Antiochus Epiphanes; the general pre-Advent timing of the investigative judgment, according to Daniel 7; the specific timing for the end of the 2300-day prophecy and commencement of the investigative judgment (22 October 1844), according to Dan 8:14 (utilizing the same starting date for the seventy-weeks prophecy of Dan 9:24-27); the identity of the sanctuary as the heavenly sanctuary in Daniel 8; and the polyvalent meaning of the “cleansing” of the sanctuary, which includes especially the vindicating of the saints against the false charges of Satan.

Moore also provides popular access to new exegetical data that have been forthcoming in Adventist scholarship in the last few years regarding the book of Hebrews. Most Christian scholars dealing with Hebrews claim that the various “entrance” passages in Hebrews (e.g., 6:19-20; 9:12; 10:19-20) refer to Christ’s entering into the heavenly Most Holy Place to engage in his antitypical Day of Atonement work. If this interpretation is correct—that Christ, already in the first century, started the antitypical Day of Atonement, then there is little or no room for the Adventist understanding of the antitypical Day of Atonement beginning on 22 October 1844. Moore responds to this problem by synthesizing the work of several Adventist scholars, showing that, according to Hebrews, Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary at his ascension to *inaugurate* its services, not to begin his Day of Atonement work. The book of Hebrews presents Christ’s work of investigative judgment of God’s professed people as still future from the perspective of the first century, in harmony with the typology of Leviticus and the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.

There are a couple of additional pieces of the investigative-judgment puzzle that I wish Moore had been able to include in his study. One is the striking evidence throughout Scripture of God’s regular procedure of conducting an investigative judgment (legal trial proceedings, often termed by scholars as a covenant lawsuit), starting already in Eden (Genesis 3) and evident before God’s executive judgment at the flood (Genesis 6), the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11), and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19). There are actually more than two hundred examples of a divine investigative judgment in Scripture, and most of the time the result of the judgment brings vindication of God’s people! If God regularly conducts an investigative judgment before his executive judgment; if he regularly opens the books, as it were, to show that he has done all he can to save all that he can, and that his people stand vindicated against the accusations of their enemy—then it should not be at all surprising to find a final investigative judgment at the end of history to vindicate God’s people against Satan’s accusations.

Another piece of the puzzle that I miss in Moore’s study is the evidence showing that the investigative judgment is only one part of a multiphase

theology of judgment in Scripture. An important study by Jiří Moskala has shown that there are actually seven phases of divine judgment in salvation history, each rooted in the judgment at the cross, and each having a different purpose in revealing the truth about God and his people to a different audience! (“Toward a Biblical Theology of God’s Judgment: A Celebration of the Cross in Seven Phases of Divine Universal Judgment: An Overview of a Theocentric-Christocentric Approach,” *JATS* 15/1 [2004]: 138-165). Moore’s discussion does uphold the cross and the gospel in presenting the investigative judgment, but it could have been strengthened by pointing to this sevenfold cross-centered development of the theology of judgment in Scripture.

Some of the interpretations included in Moore’s book are his own suggestions of how to reconcile difficult biblical data. For example, the book of Hebrews, on one hand, presents Christ as “sitting at the right hand of Majesty/God” (Heb 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2), presumably on his throne in the Most Holy Place, while at the same time Christ intercedes in the “Holy Place” (Heb 7:25). Furthermore, Dan 7:9-10 implies that both the Father and the Son move to a new location for the commencement of the investigative judgment. Moore attempts to reconcile these seemingly contradictory portrayals by suggesting that (1) the heavenly sanctuary is not divided by a veil into two compartments (Holy Place and Most Holy Place), but rather is comprised of a single throne room; and (2) this heavenly throne room has two parts. “Each one can be considered heaven’s Holy Place, and each can also be considered heaven’s Most Holy Place” (282). Moore acknowledges the tentativeness of his proposal, asking: “Is this what heaven is really like? I don’t know; it’s just a suggestion” (*ibid.*). An intriguing suggestion! But I’m not sure all will be convinced of its cogency (I am not . . . yet!). I agree with Moore that “it’s a mistake for us to argue overly much about heavenly architecture” (282). At the same time, I think we also agree that, in opposition to the view of much of the Christian world that still accepts the Platonic notion of a God who has no form and does not dwell in space and time, the Bible insists upon the spatiotemporal reality of the heavenly sanctuary.

Despite the few additional points that I might wish to be included in this book, and the few areas where arguments might have been stated more precisely (from a scholarly point of view), overall I believe this book has immense potential for dispelling doubts and questions about the Adventist doctrine of the investigative judgment. I consider this book the best synthesis of the major biblical arguments in favor of the investigative judgment, and highly recommend it to scholars and laypersons alike, both to those who are Seventh-day Adventists and to those of other Christian traditions who wish to read an evenhanded treatment of this foundational, distinctive doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Andrews University

RICHARD M. DAVIDSON

Muraoka, T. *A Greek-Hebrew/Aramaic Two-way Index to the Septuagint*. Louvain: Peeters, 2010. xi + 383 pp. Hardcover, \$87.00.

Takamitsu Muraoka is a mainstay in lexicography, Semitic languages, and indices, beginning with his Greek-Hebrew/Aramaic index to 1 Esdras (Scholars, 1984), and his *Emphatic Words and Structures in Biblical Hebrew* (Brill, 1985). He also revised Joüon's *Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2009), and Porten's *A Grammar of Egyptian Aramaic* (Brill, 2004). He has edited and coedited volumes on the Hebrew of the DSS and Ben Sira (Brill, 1997, 2000) and another including those documents and the Mishnah (Brill, 1999). He has also edited studies in Qumran Aramaic (Peeters, 1992) and Ancient Hebrew semantics (Peeters, 1995, 1998). Add to this a grammar of *Modern Hebrew for Biblical Scholars* (Harrasowitz, 1998), a *Classical Syriac for Hebraists* (Harrasowitz, 1987), and his *Classical Syriac: A Basic Grammar with a Chrestomathy* (Harrasowitz, 2005). Finally, Muraoka has worked extensively in Septuagint lexicography, with his initial *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint (Twelve Prophets)* (Peeters, 1993), his subsequent *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint: Chiefly of the Pentateuch and the Twelve Prophets* (Peeters, 2003; reviewed in *AUSS* 45 [2007]: 277-278) and the now complete *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Peeters, 2009; reviewed in *AUSS* 48 [2010]: 347-348).

The present volume supplements both Muraoka's 2009 lexicon and his *Hebrew/Aramaic Index to the Septuagint: Keyed to the Hatch-Redpath Concordance* (Baker, 1998), for which Muraoka prepared a prior version of a two-way index. In truth, it is a supplement to the former and an updated replacement of the latter. The book contains a general introduction (vii-viii), abbreviations (ix-x), and bibliography (xi). Part 1 provides the Greek word(s) of the Septuagint alongside the corresponding Hebrew/Aramaic word(s) and the frequency of that correlation in brackets. Much of this corresponds to the successive collection of data accrued in the author's 1993 and 2002 lexicons. It has been removed from the most recent and complete lexicon (2009), with all the data supplied in the present volume instead.

Part 2 begins with its own introduction, which, while updating the introduction to the 1998 index, provides an explanation of the method and symbols used. Each entry lists the Hebrew word first. If it is a verb, Muraoka lists the conjugation of the form presented. If it is an Aramaic term, it is so designated. The Hebrew term (e.g., כָּן, 153) is accompanied by the corresponding Greek terms and a reference to its location in Hatch and Redpath (e.g., ἐνεδρεύειν, 472a; σκέπη, 1269a).

Of course, one must be cautious in using such a volume, for it presumes that the MT indexed here serves as the *Vorlage* for the Greek renderings. One does well to consider the words as "corresponding" prior to making judgments about translational equivalency. This caution aside, Muraoka's two-way index is an essential tool. It is thoroughly updated, based on extensive, critical review

of Hatch and Redpath, but does not require ready access to that bulky work, as did the 1998 edition. Moreover, there is new data supplied here, including some references to the so-called apocrypha, Qumran manuscripts, and various recensions of the Greek OT/LXX. As a companion to Hatch and Redpath and Muraoka's 2009 lexicon, this is an indispensable tool not only for septuagintal studies, but for anyone engaged in critical research in the OT or NT.

Bethel Seminary
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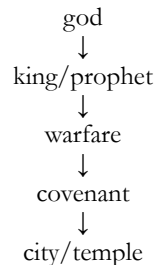
DANIEL M. GURTNER

Niehaus, Jeffrey J. *Ancient Near Eastern Themes in Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008. 203 pp. Paper, \$18.99.

Many scholars have written on the ancient Near Eastern background of Scripture, but not all have focused on how the ancient worldviews have shaped biblical theology. Even fewer have traced its influence on the NT. Jeffrey Jay Niehaus, a Professor of Old Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, explores possible ancient Near Eastern influences in a number of major biblical themes, including concepts such as the royal shepherd, covenant and conquest, city and temple, and the eventual restoration of all things. He regards these themes as an integration into a specific schema outlining how God operates in the world—a schema that was widely known and understandable to the ancient world. He proposes that

The basic structure of ideas is this: A god works through a man (a royal or prophetic figure, often styled a shepherd) to wage war against the god's enemies and thereby advance his kingdom. The royal or prophetic protagonist is in a covenant with the god, as are the god's people. The god establishes a temple among his people, either before or after the warfare, because he wants to dwell among them. This can mean the founding (or choice) of a city, as well as a temple location. The ultimate purpose is to bring into the god's kingdom those who were not part of it (30).

He then provides a simple outline to illustrate this process:



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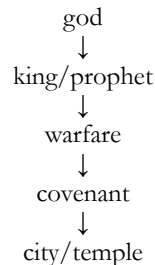
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He then provides a simple outline to illustrate this process:



Niehaus first examines these overarching themes in their Egyptian and various Mesopotamian contexts, providing extensive background material. Then he explores how a similar process is developed and handled in the Bible. He sees each of these themes as finally realized in Jesus, who becomes humanity's shepherd, wages spiritual warfare, conquers, fulfills the covenant, and dwells in the church, his city/temple.

Not only does this give the modern interpreter clues as to how the biblical writers and their audiences might have understood such concepts, but it might also give the modern reader hints as to how they should apply the biblical version of such themes to the contemporary situation. For example, a recent controversy among some evangelicals is how to understand certain NT statements that seem to imply that Jesus placed himself subordinate to God the Father (see, e.g., Millard J. Erickson, *Who's Tampering with the Trinity? An Assessment of the Subordination Debate* [Grand Rapids, Kregel, 2009]). After describing how ancient Egyptian pharaohs, as "sons" of the god Amon, would present a newly won kingdom to their "father" deity, Niehaus points to a Christological parallel in 1 Cor 15:24-25 in which Jesus offers his kingdom to his Father (69; for further expansion of the concept, see pp. 62-82). It would be interesting to explore what implications this ancient theme might have for interpreting the Jesus-subordinationist texts.

Niehaus shows the strong parallels between the ancient Near Eastern understanding of how the gods functioned and how the God of Israel operated. But how should we view them? Did ancient Israel just build upon the surrounding worldview? While he does not elaborate, Niehaus does not regard the biblical writers to be a mere reflection of the surrounding cultures. Rather, he sees the parallels between ancient Near Eastern pagan theology and biblical theology as a contrast between a distorted and counterfeit theology that he suggests was promulgated by the demonic influences discussed by the apostle Paul and a divinely inspired theology that God revealed through his prophets and the biblical writers (179). He believes God allows "such theological parallels as we have explored to become manifest over many centuries in the ancient world so that truth would appear, even in darkened and polytheistic forms. Truth in such forms could have no saving power, but it did prepare a matrix of thought, a background of theological understanding, so that when God truly appeared and did such things as the pagans had claimed for their gods—instituting covenants, giving laws, commanding conquest and extending his kingdom, even by signs and wonders—his revelation would come to a people who had some theological preparation for it" (181).

Whether or not one accepts Niehaus's conclusion, his work on these ancient themes, when balanced with how Scripture itself employs them, should help illuminate additional depths of the biblical text. To cite just one instance, after presenting the imagery of Assyrian monarchs as mighty hunters, especially of lions, he points out how David employs the same royal

typology, thus indicating that he is also of royal lineage (48-50), then traces the imagery's Christological use. David's explanation of why he was qualified to face Goliath was far more than a recounting of some dramatic incidents in his shepherding experience.

One major theme that Niehaus does not deal with is that of creation. It would be interesting to see how he would apply his model, especially to the Christological aspects of creation.

Hagerstown, Maryland

GERALD WHEELER

Peterson, Eugene H. *Practice Resurrection: A Conversation on Growing Up in Christ*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 302 pp. Hardcover, \$24.00.

Practice Resurrection is the fifth book in Eugene H. Peterson's five-volume series on spiritual theology, a capstone accomplishment in his writing vocation. Among contemporary writers on spirituality, Peterson towers high with his insistent focus on the work of the Triune God. His books are an antidote to spirituality books that focus primarily on detailed instructions on how to seek God.

Peterson's stature as a major writer on Christian spirituality has grown out of his twenty-nine years as Pastor of the Christ Our King Presbyterian Church in Bel Air, Maryland, his fifteen years as Professor of Spiritual Theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia, and the more than thirty books he has written on the Christian life. He is best known as the translator of *The Message*, a popular paraphrase of the Bible.

Practice Resurrection is based on Ephesians. His many years of teaching the book of Ephesians in the church and college settings have added to his understanding and equipped him to write this new book. The strange title, *Practice Resurrection*, brings to mind the common expression "practice the spiritual disciplines." However, it is unlikely that Peterson intends that connection. This book, like his other books on spirituality, emphasizes God's work, not ours. Far be it from Peterson to focus on human activity; his theme is always on the activity and grace of God.

The phrase "practice resurrection" comes from the poet Wendell Berry, and Peterson understands it to mean to "grow up in Christ" (70). "When we practice resurrection, we keep company with Jesus, alive and present, who knows where we are going better than we do, which is always 'from glory to glory'" (8). Sooner or later anyone serious about growing up in Christ will have to confront and be confronted by the church, a reality that leads him to Ephesians. Peterson's reflection on Ephesians and the church, however, is not a sales pitch, enticing the reader with visions of what the church can do for him or what she can do for the church. He rejects the church as a "humanly managed popular provider of religious goods and services" (28).

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Practice Resurrection is the fifth book in Eugene H. Peterson's five-volume series on spiritual theology, a capstone accomplishment in his writing vocation. Among contemporary writers on spirituality, Peterson towers high with his insistent focus on the work of the Triune God. His books are an antidote to spirituality books that focus primarily on detailed instructions on how to seek God.

Peterson's stature as a major writer on Christian spirituality has grown out of his twenty-nine years as Pastor of the Christ Our King Presbyterian Church in Bel Air, Maryland, his fifteen years as Professor of Spiritual Theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia, and the more than thirty books he has written on the Christian life. He is best known as the translator of *The Message*, a popular paraphrase of the Bible.

Practice Resurrection is based on Ephesians. His many years of teaching the book of Ephesians in the church and college settings have added to his understanding and equipped him to write this new book. The strange title, *Practice Resurrection*, brings to mind the common expression "practice the spiritual disciplines." However, it is unlikely that Peterson intends that connection. This book, like his other books on spirituality, emphasizes God's work, not ours. Far be it from Peterson to focus on human activity; his theme is always on the activity and grace of God.

The phrase "practice resurrection" comes from the poet Wendell Berry, and Peterson understands it to mean to "grow up in Christ" (70). "When we practice resurrection, we keep company with Jesus, alive and present, who knows where we are going better than we do, which is always 'from glory to glory'" (8). Sooner or later anyone serious about growing up in Christ will have to confront and be confronted by the church, a reality that leads him to Ephesians. Peterson's reflection on Ephesians and the church, however, is not a sales pitch, enticing the reader with visions of what the church can do for him or what she can do for the church. He rejects the church as a "humanly managed popular provider of religious goods and services" (28).

His long pastoral experience showed him the messiness of congregations—the bickering, the sinning, the brokenness. Instead, he sees the church as “a congregation of embarrassingly ordinary people in and through whom God chooses to be present to the world” (28).

Why should we embrace the church? “The short answer is,” Peterson says, “because the Holy Spirit formed it to be a colony of heaven in the country of death” (12). To him, the church is a miracle conceived by the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

Ephesians does not address “liturgy, mission, and polity” (14). Instead it is “a revelation of the church we never see. It shows us the healthy soil and root system of all the operations of the Trinity out of which the church that we *do* see grows” (14, emphasis original). Ephesians reveals the “essence that is behind the appearances: God’s will, Christ’s presence, the Holy Spirit’s work” (15). This placement of all action on God rather than on human beings is quintessential Peterson.

Peterson builds his exegesis of Paul’s notoriously complicated opening in Eph 1:3-14 by organizing it around seven verbs describing God’s action: God blessed, chose, destined, bestowed, lavished, made known, and will gather up. “God starts everything. Everything” (67). We thus live in a world “characterized by the grace of God” (93).

What, then, is the human role in growth? Peterson coined the term “acquired passivity” to explain. “It is not what we do; it is what we participate in. But we cannot participate apart from a willed passivity, entering into and giving ourselves up to what is previous to us, the presence and action of God in Christ that is other than us. Such passivity does not come easy to us. It must be acquired” (95).

Acquired passivity does not reject the work of the individual, but rather requires a nuanced understanding in which all human work is preceded by God’s work. Peterson points out that Paul links grace and works in Eph 2:8-10: “It is by *grace* you have been saved . . . we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do *good works*.” He illustrates this point by reviewing the days of creation, noting that God’s work on each day is a “sheer gift” to humans (101). His “acquired passivity” appears to be a way of living that is centered on God. When we live with the recognition that God has provided our new life in Christ, we participate with him in all of our work. Thus he rejects self-created spirituality, made by people who “go off by themselves and develop a Rube Goldberg religious contraption out of God-fragments or God-rumors picked up in back alleys, flea markets, and talk shows.” Nor does he think much of people who “set themselves up as freelance connoisseurs of transcendence, searching out experiences of ecstasy, taking photographs of sunsets, collecting books and music that inspire” (168).

In *Practice Resurrection*, while Peterson works his way through Ephesians chapter by chapter, he looks at only a few verses in each chapter. He needs only

one key text to write pages of conversational prose, illustrating outstanding ideas with common observations and juxtaposing refined wording with a few favorite idioms such as “get in on it,” “will have none of it,” and “get used to it.” Every few pages he offers a sentence that is so well crafted in thought and style that the reader feels compelled to mark it or save it in some way.

Peterson’s artistry with the English language has most likely grown out of his wide reading in literary classics. For example, he once spent six hours a week for seven months reading the corpus of Dostoevsky, pursuing some of it more than once. He quotes novelists and poets more often than theologians. This is not to suggest that human writers take precedence over Scripture. Peterson knows Scripture, even in its original languages. He simply bypasses the language of theologians (cf. *Under the Unpredictable Plant: An Exploration in Vocational Holiness* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992], 49). In *Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006], 165) he writes: “when a zeal for Holy Scripture and a zeal for common language collide, sparks fly.” Indeed, the sparks fly in *Practice Resurrection*.

Andrews University

JANE THAYER

Thuesen, Peter J. *Predestination: The American Career of a Contentious Doctrine*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. 288 pp. Hardcover, \$29.95.

The notion of predestination—the idea that God foreordains one’s eternal destiny—is one of the most controversial doctrines in the history of Christianity. This helpful overview, written by Peter Thuesen, a Professor of Religious Studies at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis, examines the presuppositions behind the controversy.

Thuesen begins by proposing that “A strict doctrine of absolute predestination can make God’s sovereign will seem as arbitrary and cruel as a tornado. . . . Yet for those who find assurance that God has foreordained them to heavenly bliss, absolute predestination can be the sweetest of all doctrines.” As a consequence, predestination “elicits strong reaction” (3). Thuesen breaks new ground on this topic by arguing that there has never been a reigning orthodoxy in American religion. Most of the literature on predestination is Protestant or confessional, at best. He thus seeks to break new ground by contextualizing it within American religious thought.

American religious debate demonstrates the deep influence of Augustinian anthropology. “Few Christians have denied predestination outright,” but frame it in terms of whether God elects people conditionally or unconditionally. Thus predestination is a part of a package of issues, including matters of the existence of a literal hell, the authority of the Bible, and the extent of God’s providential involvement, that serve as the “proverbial elephant in the living room of American denominationalism” (6). Instead of framing the

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debate in terms of predestination and free will, Thuesen suggests structuring dialogue on predestinarianism and sacramentalism, two pieties that form polar extremes.

Predestination: The American Career of a Contentious Doctrine is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 sets the historical stage of the American debates: “The Protestant reformers’ reassertation of Augustine’s strong predestinarianism in the sixteenth century was in large measure a reaction to the perceived abuses of the medieval sacramentalism system.” Protestants developed sophisticated delineations between Calvinism and Arminianism that require technical distinctions (the author provides a helpful “Glossary of Theological Terms” at the end of the book). In chapter 2, he argues that Puritans were “dissidents” who comprised “a persistent sacramental strain”; thus predestination was not an exclusively Protestant doctrine (74). Additionally, the sacramental-predestinarian tension extended across the Protestant-Catholic divide. Thuesen argues for a Puritan discipline he describes as “ecstatic agony,” which he defines as “the constructive pain of ongoing struggle.” The goal was “to experience the exhilarating rush of victory” (69).

Chapter 3 gives an overview of Arminianism and other challenges to absolute predestination in eighteenth-century America. Thuesen places much of the early opposition to the old Puritan synthesis on Anglican missionaries, especially some like John Wesley, who were highly motivated by high-church sacramentalism. The resultant debates created a permanent rift within American evangelicalism, which were further exacerbated during the American Revolution (100-135). The white American male became the “master of his own destiny,” thereby prompting a variety of upstart groups, including Methodists, Campbellites, Stoneites, Mormons, and Adventists.

Old-style European confessionalism did not disappear either. Chapter 5 highlights its revival by immigrant Catholics and Lutherans. These “seemingly strange bedfellows” shared a history of internal strife over predestination and a robust sacramentalism that set them apart, which led to polemics between Catholics and Protestants over purgatory and led up to “a spectacular predestinarian controversy in the 1880s” that continues to affect Lutheran synodical alignments. Chapter 6 brings the debate back to Puritan roots: Presbyterians and Baptists, who continued during the twentieth century to debate predestination.

In the epilogue, Thuesen considers the “other”—the Protestant megachurch, which might lead one to believe that the demise of dogma is complete, especially as contentious a dogma as predestination. Yet in his personal journey toward Rick Warren and the Saddleback Church community, he finds that they continue to dance around predestination even if they don’t use the term. The Augustinian anthropology, in general, continues to pervade American religion. “Many people would rather believe that a wise

God predetermines everything—even unpleasant things—than contemplate the alternative” (12, 214-216).

This intellectual history probes more than an academic problem by highlighting a basic question that haunts the human psyche: Where do we go when we die? Thuesen describes the heart of an answer as “something mystical” (13, 218). Yet mystery, he argues, has been eroded in two ways. Both the weakened hold of *sacramental* mystery over the Christian imagination and the predestinarian controversies have contributed to the decline of *dogmatic* mystery. As a result, the sense of the miraculous, which predestinarians sought to preserve, has been removed.

For those readers already familiar with Thuesen’s previous work, *In Discordance with the Scriptures: American Protestant Battles Over Translating the Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), the reader will not be disappointed with this new work. Well documented and articulate, Thuesen’s contribution challenges both Protestants and Catholics to recognize the “lens” through which each views the otherworldly and to return to the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*—a mystery before which one trembles and is fascinated.

Seventh-day Adventist scholars in particular would do well to become familiar with this broad overview and contextualization of predestination. Thuesen furthermore highlights Adventist ambiguity over this issue (122-124): William Miller was a Baconian interpreter who believed “in an essentially Arminian election based on divine foreknowledge.” Later Ellen White pushed the reincarnated Adventist movement toward a Wesleyan view of freewill, although, surprisingly for Thuesen, the question of divine indeterminacy in Adventist thought “came to the fore dramatically” through Richard Rice’s *The Openness of God* (1980). Although Adventism definitely leans toward Arminianism—as highlighted by the recent Arminian Conference at Andrews University—there continue to be both polemics toward Calvinism (e.g., the independent ministry of the 1888 Message Study Community) and even, among a few, a residual attraction toward sacramentalism. Understanding this broader debate will only enlighten Adventist struggles.

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